

# THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

No. 12

1940

## THE IMPERIALIST WAR

AND THE

WORKING CLASS

URBAN MIDDLE CLASS

PEASANTRY

•

HOW THE BOLSHEVIKS WON

THE MASSES IN 1917

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EDITOR: EARL BROWDER

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## THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT AND THE IMPERIALIST WAR

**C**APITALIST Europe has entered its second winter of war. Yet the end is not in sight. The sufferings of the masses are becoming intolerable. And the longer the horrors last, the more clearly are the working people realizing the true, imperialist character of the war. The efforts of official war propaganda to paint this ruthless struggle for colonies, sources of raw material, spheres of influence and a re-division of the world in progressive colors are becoming more and more transparent and unconvincing. The working masses of town and country are bearing the oppressive burdens of war with growing reluctance, and their yearning for peace is growing stronger and stronger. But not all of them, by a long way, can as yet see a way of escape from the abyss into which they have been plunged. Only the working class can show them the way out.

In its struggle against the imperialist war the working class embodies the cherished hopes and wishes of the masses. And the working class wages its struggle against the imperialist war from inherent necessity. Everything that is hostile to it, hated by it, and repugnant to it is concentrated in the snaky coils of the war. All the efforts of the proletariat to escape

from its state of exploitation and disfranchisement and to win democratic liberties and a human existence are combined in the struggle against the imperialist war. The elementary interests of the proletariat categorically and imperatively dictate this struggle.

On the other hand, the proletariat is the most important factor in the conduct of the war. It is through the working people, and above all through the working class, that the imperialists can conduct their war, can produce and operate the sinews of war, can cope with the immense technical and organizational tasks of war. The conduct of modern war stands and falls by the efforts of the workers in the coal and iron mines, at the blast furnaces, in the boiler rooms and at the factory machines. The final decision is in the hands of the working class. The bourgeoisie is fully aware of this, and it therefore encompasses the working class in a steel net of compulsion, control, and disfranchisement, as well as in the silken threads of demagoguery, flattery and deceit. In this imperialist war, the working class resembles the smith in the saga, whose overlord cut the tendons of his legs and chained him to his anvil to make sure of the benefits of his craft. Thus, opens the saga of Wieland the



Smith; it closes with the captive secretly forging a pair of wings with the help of which he soars to freedom and to victory.

\* \* \*

The immensity of the tasks that confront the proletariat in this war present it with stupendous difficulties. A gigantic imperialist machinery of armed power towers before it, bristling with tanks and aircraft—a hitherto unparalleled concentration of means of coercion. Every capitalist country is overshadowed by the dark clouds of reaction: persecution, prisons, executioners and the vile brood of informers. Would it be wise to undertake the struggle under such circumstances? Can such an inequality of strength be ignored? Would it not be better to wait, to lie low, to renounce the struggle for the time being? These are the very sentiments which the agents of the bourgeoisie are zealously fostering and encouraging, for the passivity, pessimism and timidity of the oppressed are the most effective weapons in the hands of the oppressors. Methods of direct intimidation are supplemented by the Social-Democratic and other agents of the bourgeoisie, instilling the idea into the minds of the masses that under the circumstances all attempts at resistance are hopeless, and that nothing remains for the working class but to “look the facts in the face” and submit to the bourgeoisie.

The power machinery of the ruling classes is undoubtedly a fact. But there are other facts, too, highly important facts. And the working

class will be looking the facts in the face only when it takes all the social facts into consideration. The fact cannot be ignored that capitalism is rotten to the core, that the bourgeoisie seems stronger than it actually is. The collapse of France made it abundantly clear that the bourgeoisie is internally corroded, eaten through and through, and that beneath its seemingly flourishing exterior lurk corruption and decay. That the bourgeoisie keeps rattling chains and flourishing weapons, that it is startled by every free word, and strikes blindly at the least sound of criticism, can certainly not be regarded as a sign of strength; it is rather a symptom of weakness, of its mortal dread of any social movement.

Nor can the fact be ignored that in the capitalist countries the peasants and the bulk of the urban middle classes are being plunged deeper and deeper into poverty, that they are losing their faith in capitalism and gradually shaking off the influence of the ruling class. Still less can the fact be ignored that whole nations, robbed of their freedom, and their national existence endangered, are beginning to rise up against imperialism, and that numerous people on whose backs the imperialists have built their empires are straining those backs in an effort to throw off the intolerable burden. The fact cannot be ignored that the great Chinese people are by their anti-imperialist struggle for freedom setting an example to all the peoples in the colonial and dependent countries, that these peoples are beginning to see through

the game of the imperialists and are growing more and more unwillingly docilely to play the part of the spoils in the imperialist war. The fact cannot be ignored that a profound regrouping of forces is going on within the working class, that ever larger numbers of workers are realizing the bankruptcy of Social-Democracy, and that these masses are beginning, with proletarian thoroughness, to draw the conclusions from their years of experience. Lastly, the fact cannot be ignored that the power and prestige of the Soviet Union are steadily growing, that the force of attraction of socialist ideas and realities is greater than it has ever been before, and that the imperialists are finding it harder to keep the working people from understanding the policy of the socialist state. The working class bears all these facts in mind in its struggle against the imperialist war.

Hence developments in their totality by no means corroborate the theory that imperialism is now stronger than ever and that the working class stands defenseless in face of reaction. The imperialist machinery of power towers before our eyes—but if we look closely we detect less obtrusive but very highly significant processes going on beneath the surface, ceaseless social changes and movements that are paving the way for a new relation of forces. However durable the power of the bourgeoisie, and however non-durable the progressive accumulation of counteracting forces in the imperialist world system may seem today, Stalin's precept holds good:

"The dialectical method regards as important primarily not that which at the given moment seems to be durable and yet is already beginning to die away, but that which is arising and developing, even though at the given moment it may appear to be not durable, for the dialectical method considers invincible only that which is arising and developing." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 107, International Publishers, New York.)

The shiftings and changes in the situation and in the consciousness of the working people are proceeding incessantly; their anger, their bitterness, their hatred of the rulers are accumulating, while the solidarity, organization and fighting determination of the oppressed are steadily making headway—until at last quantity will be transformed into quality and the accumulated forces will violently burst to the surface.

\* \* \*

The bourgeoisie is doing its utmost to mislead and disorganize the proletariat. It supplements violence by demagogy. No less important than prisons and hangmen to the imperialists are the Social-Democrats and other demagogues, who split the ranks of the working class, and imbue them with disbelief in their own proletarian strength. These demagogues are the worst enemies of the working class and indispensable tools of the bourgeoisie—even more indispensable in war time than in peace time. They promise the workers all their hearts



desire and spare no colors in painting a future world in which prosperity and social justice will reign supreme.

True, all these promises are made contingent on one fatal proviso—they are to come into effect only when the war is over and the “final victory” has been won. There will be no more poor, no more rich, no unemployed, no privileges of wealth or position—after the war and the “final victory.” There will be old-age pensions, guaranteed health and secure incomes for all the workers—after the war and the “final victory.” The longer the war drags on and the greater the hardships, the more specific and effusive these promises become. The more impatient the yearning of the masses for the end of the war and the more the latter recedes into the distance, the more often the demagogues conjure up against the dark heavens of war the mirage of an ideal post-war world, and the more precisely is every one of its lineaments depicted. This all testifies to the uneasiness with which the bourgeoisie is observing the changes going on in the minds of the masses, compelling it to drive its demagoguery to ever wider limits.

The influence of this demagoguery is undoubtedly diminishing, but it is still considerable. Broad sections of the working people, torn by conflicting feelings, and their belief in the promises of the imperialists shaken, although not sufficiently to drive them to a new orientation, are beginning to hearken to the voice of the Communists. Among the Social-Democratic workers every-

where a tendency to draw closer to the Communists is undoubtedly to be observed, although varying in degree in different countries. Mass movements are manifesting themselves in diverse forms, which differ from the mass movements of the earlier period of the war by their more specific demands and their higher degree of organization. The mass movements of that period were relatively broad, but they were unformed, and directed against the war in general. When the war grew more intense and reached its climax in the collapse of France, a lull in the activity of the mass supervened. This activity was resumed when it became clear that the end of the war was not in sight, and now it was directed, not against the war in general, but specifically against capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression.

These mass movements assume different forms in different countries: in one country we observe a powerful mass movement of the factory workers for higher wage and better working conditions, in another, huge demonstrations of the masses against the imperialist oppressors and their tools in the ranks of the home bourgeoisie; in one country the struggle is concentrated in the industrial plants, while in another it is in the streets, the market places and sports grounds that the activity of the masses is manifested; in one country the working masses are stirred by economic questions, in another by the national question, and in another still by questions of foreign policy. But these movements are to be observed



in nearly all the capitalist countries, and everywhere it is the working class that throws its weight into the scales. It therefore appears that neither the machinery of coercive power nor the demagoguery of the ruling classes is capable of preventing for long the struggle of the working people, and of the working class in particular, against the imperialist war and the imperialist rulers. In view of the immensity of the war catastrophe, violence is gradually beginning to lose its terrors, and demagoguery its charms.

\* \* \*

The fight today is to rescue the masses ideologically and politically from the influence of the bourgeoisie and of its agents, to inspire them with confidence in their own strength, to rally them around a firmly organized core, to encourage them to more spirited action, and to develop their solidarity and organization on all sides. The bourgeoisie itself is showing, by directing its offensive against the proletariat, what the chief issue of this struggle is, and what questions today stand in the foreground.

The most important thing, in the opinion of the bourgeoisie, is to isolate the Communist parties from the masses and to defeat and destroy them. It is planning to cripple the trade unions, to dissolve them or to take them entirely under its own control. It is endeavoring to sow mutual distrust and discontent between the working class, on the one hand, and the peasants and urban middle classes, on the other. It is seeking to wean the workers from

Marxism and to drive the spirit of proletarian internationalism out of them. It resorts to every means of inciting the workers of one nation against those of another and of fostering chauvinistic sentiments. It spares no efforts to undermine the confidence of the workers in their own strength and in the Soviet Union. It realizes perfectly wherein the strength of the proletariat lies, what vital nerves it has to strike at in order to cripple the struggle of the masses against the imperialist war.

But the working class is learning from its own fighting experience to realize more clearly what issues are at stake today. The most important and the most essential factor is the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the Communist Party. Everywhere, the bourgeoisie opened its offensive against the masses with a systematic attack on the Communist Party, and everywhere the Communist Party was and remains the champion of the interests of the people. Wherever the reactionaries succeeded in suppressing the Communist Party, the popular front was broken and the working people were ruthlessly put down.

On the other hand, the working people have had thousands of opportunities to convince themselves that never and nowhere has it been possible to break the fighting spirit of the Communist Party, to destroy the revolutionary party of the proletariat. When the people were being betrayed on all hands, when there was capitulation all around, and the masses looked in vain for advice and assistance from their old

leaders, the Communist Party stuck to its post, remained loyal to the people, and told them the truth; it taught the workers and the working people generally to adjust themselves to the new conditions of the struggle, and inspired them with new courage, new hope and new determination.

The Communist Party is the indestructible core of the proletariat and of all the working people. Around this indestructible core the proletariat are again rallying, first the most class-conscious and the most courageous workers, those unreservedly devoted to the cause of their class and their people, and then increasing numbers of those who had temporarily lost their bearings. In a number of countries in which the Social-Democratic parties lamentably collapsed, spreading panic and despair around them, increasing numbers of Social-Democratic workers are today drawing closer to the Communist Party, from which they receive advice and derive new energy, in which they are gaining growing confidence and to which they look as the ideological and organizing center of the working class. It is only around this center that the working class can rally and proletarian class unity be built up. Hence to strengthen, support and reinforce the Communist Party in every way is not only a narrow Party duty; it is the central issue of the whole working class and of all the working people generally.

The Party is the directing, guiding and organizing force in the great struggle of the working people. But

in order to achieve the maximum organization of the working class, other and broader organizational forms are required. The natural cohesion of the workers in the factories, and their all-embracing and indestructible fighting solidarity, a solidarity not confined to isolated actions, must be enhanced to the utmost. The workers' elected representatives in the factories (shop stewards, factory councils, etc.), may serve as a firm backbone for this natural cohesion and in the sequel acquire an even greater significance.

The trade unions are of cardinal importance in the struggle of the working class against the burdens of the war. It is in the trade unions that the workers can best develop the struggle against war wages, against increased sweating and exploitation, and against military drill and compulsion, and thus bring organized masses into action against the imperialist war.

In those countries where large class-struggle trade unions still exist, the Communists are proving themselves the most consistent fighters for the growth and power of these unions, for the organization of those still unorganized, for trade union democracy and the trade union idea, which lies in the unreserved defense of the economic interests of the proletariat against the attacks of the capitalist exploiters.

In those countries where the class-struggle trade unions have been suppressed and replaced by organizations under the direct control of the reactionaries, the Communists advise the workers to join even



these organizations, for they offer some opportunity for organized unity, for the defense of elementary conditions of life and for a common struggle, even if on behalf of limited demands. In all countries the Communists fight for the preservation of trade union principles among the working class, and for the highest degree of organization of the proletariat possible under the given circumstances.

In their struggle against the imperialist war, the class-conscious and politically minded workers do not forget what hardships the war entails for the mass of the peasants and the urban middle classes, and what bitterness against the war and its initiators is accumulating among these working masses. They are fully awake to their inevitable vacillations, but are not thereby deterred from helping them in every way, from supporting them in their misery and need, and from acting as their friends at all times.

The bourgeoisie endeavors to divert the indignation of the working people over the war profiteering of the wealthy against individual small dealers and tradesmen, or against individual peasants who happen to violate some compulsory regulation of the war economy system. The class-conscious workers see through these maneuvers and refuse to direct their anger against the small folk who serve the ruling classes as scapegoats. Finance capital, which unleashed this war and is profiting by it, is the common enemy of the workers, the peasants, the small dealers and the small tradesmen.

The alliance of the class-conscious workers with the peasants, the ur-

ban middle classes and the intelligentsia of the oppressed nations is becoming particularly close. The proletariat fights in the front ranks of the national struggle of liberation against the imperialist oppressors. In the colonies and dependent and oppressed countries, the working class fights consistently and undauntedly for the emancipation of its own nation and against the foreign oppressors and their traitorous accomplices in the ranks of the home bourgeoisie.

In this just struggle, the Communists oppose all chauvinistic attempts at incitement, all attempts to turn the people's hatred of the imperialist oppressors into a hatred of other nations. They explain to the working people that to harbor a chauvinistic hatred of other nations is to bring grist to the mill of the imperialists, helping them to maintain the lie of "national unity" in their own country and to line up their own nation for battle against the oppressed peoples. They explain to the working people that the workers and peasants beyond the frontier are not to blame for the oppression of foreign nations, that they too are the victims of capitalist exploitation and of imperialist war, that their struggle too is part of the great struggle for freedom against imperialism.

Thus, in all countries the Communists hold aloft the banner of proletarian internationalism, the banner of international solidarity and common struggle of the working class against all exploiters and oppressors.

In the lightning changes of events, the confusion and variety of impres-

sions and influences to which the masses are subjected, the working class can keep its aim in view and avoid going astray only if it steers its course by the guiding star of an all-embracing theory. This theory is Marxism-Leninism, which has stood every test and has been corroborated by the historic victory of socialism in the Soviet Union. Less than ever, in these times of great social upheaval, can a line be drawn between theory and practice; more thoroughly than ever must an end be put to the perverted idea that the theory of Marxism-Leninism is a matter for a few "theoreticians," and that in the storm of battle only the experience of "practical men" is of value. But the experience of the "practical men" is one-sided and limited, while the theory of Marxism-Leninism is the concentrated essence of the experience of the entire revolutionary proletariat from the origin of its movement to its unexampled victory on one-sixth of the surface of the earth. A book like the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* or *Leninism* contains on every page the epitome of the experience of the class struggles of a century; it is the genius of their class, the historical consciousness of the militant and victorious proletariat, which speaks to the workers in these books. The working class has paid for the false theories of Social-Democratism with blood and misery. It has paid a frightful penalty for allowing its ranks to be permeated by a hostile class ideology. It is beginning to understand that the question of theory is truly a question of life or death.

The theories of Social-Democratism and of other bourgeois trends helped to place reaction in the saddle. This has led to agonizing defeats for the working class, and, finally, to a new world carnage. To their own detriment, large numbers of workers did not take questions of theory seriously; they left these questions to the party leaders and "ideologists," while they dedicated themselves with the greatest devotion and conscientiousness to the minor day-to-day work. Today they are beginning to realize that the black flag of war waving over the capitalist world is a herald of the collapse of the false theories with which the working class movement has been infected, just as the red flag waving over the Soviet Union testifies to the triumph of the great theory of Marxism-Leninism.

This theory enables the workers to penetrate the shroud of the immediate present, to divine the course of development, to perceive the new that is arising behind the old that is passing away, properly to estimate the sum total of social forces, and to pursue the path which history has mapped out for the proletariat. Marxism-Leninism endows the proletarian fighters who have mastered it with confidence, staunchness, a sober judgment of actualities, and an inextinguishable faith in the victory of the working class.

Fighting and studying are inseparable from each other. By fighting and studying, the proletariat of the capitalist countries will grow more and more conscious of its own strength. The workers see that im-



perialism is becoming increasing entangled in its own contradictions, they see how tremendously its difficulties are growing and how its prospects are shrouded in uncertainty and obscurity. They see the growing strength and the masterly policy of the Soviet Union, which in this imperialist war has adopted a position of neutrality but not of indifference, which in the course of this war has rescued twenty-three million people from the chains of exploitation and oppression, and which has powerfully strengthened its might. They see too that the Communist parties are withstanding all attacks, and, in spite of war, terrorism and persecution, are boldly, vigorously, but cautiously organizing the struggle against the powers of reaction and proving themselves to be the indestructible, ideological, political and organizational center of the working class movement.

They see the reawakening activity of the masses, an activity which immeasurably exceeds the rudimentary beginnings of a mass movement in the second year of the first imperialist war. They see the new orientation gaining ground among large sections of the Social-Democratic workers, the growing dissatisfaction of the petty-bourgeois masses with the war regime and their increasing

doubts of the imperialists' promises of victory. They see many things that serve to increase the confidence of the working class in their own strength and thus to bring about a new upswing of the revolutionary movement.

With the all-around and energetic support of the Communist parties, with the systematic growth of proletarian solidarity, unity and organization in all its forms, and especially in the trade unions, with an organized struggle for specific economic and democratic demands, better contacts with the peasants and the urban middle classes and active championship of their economic and national interests, with the untiring efforts to achieve proletarian class unity and an alliance between the working class and the peasants and urban lower middle classes, with the consistent development of proletarian internationalism and tireless, far-reaching and systematic propaganda on behalf of the great teachings of Marxism-Leninism—with all this, the foundations for the required confidence of the working class in its own strength will be laid. And then the struggle of the working class against the imperialist war will enter a new phase and begin tangibly and palpably to influence the subsequent course of events.

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## ENGELS THE THINKER

BY F. FÜRNBERG

**I**T HAS become a commonplace that the twentieth century is an age of rapid change. What was up-to-date but yesterday is obsolete today. New and more far-reaching changes are taking place all the time. There is hardly a thing that has not changed during the past half century. New machines have appeared, machines of which nobody could even dream before; a veritable technical and scientific revolution has taken place; states have collapsed, others were founded and have been destroyed again; political systems have sprung up and vanished; various theories made a stir in their time and are now long forgotten. Who even thinks today of the political ideas that agitated people fifty or a hundred years ago?

Only Scientific Socialism, Marxism, has held its ground.

One hundred and twenty years ago Engels was born; forty-five years have elapsed since his death, and fifty-seven years have passed since Marx died. Such periods are usually more than enough for political ideas, social theories and their exponents to sink into utter oblivion. Yet Scientific Socialism, which was propounded by Marx and

Engels, has become a reality on one-sixth of the globe, and Marxism is *the* great issue which stirs literally the whole world. Every day the enemies of Marxism involuntarily provide new proof of the power of the Marxist theory; for the furious fight they are waging against Scientific Socialism today, nearly a hundred years after it was founded, is but an expression—even if in an inverted sense—of the growing power of this theory, an indication—even if a distorted one—of the complete correctness of the teachings of Marx and Engels. This fierce fight that is being waged against Marxism in the whole capitalist world today, considered alongside the periods of time mentioned above, is in itself a tribute to the genius of the great thinkers who brought Scientific Socialism into being. Half a century after their death, Marx and Engels, together with their successors, Lenin and Stalin, are the banner to which the working people all over the world are rallying in order to lead mankind to its complete emancipation from all fetters, in order to attain miracles of which hitherto people could not even dream.

In speaking of Engels, one cannot



help speaking of Marx as well. In the words of Lenin:

"Ever since fate brought Karl Marx and Frederick Engels together, the lifework of both friends became their common cause." (V. I. Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, p. 34. International Publishers, New York.)

Marx and Engels were not merely two comrades-in-arms who were in complete agreement on all more or less important questions; even when living hundreds of miles apart they worked together, helped each other to further their intellectual development, perfectly understood each other's private lives, and were close and inseparable friends. Lenin wrote the following about this friendship:

"Ancient legends tell of various touching examples of friendship. The European proletariat may say that its science was created by two scholars and fighters, whose relations surpass all the most touching tales of the ancients concerning human friendship. (*Ibid.*, p. 40.)

Marx and Engels became friends when they were still young. When they first met they already were acquainted with one another's writings. Both had already accomplished a certain amount of work and had arrived at the same conclusions; each going his own way, they had both taken the first steps toward Scientific Socialism.

From their first meeting in Paris in 1844, their roads never parted. In the first year following their meeting in Paris, Marx and Engels jointly wrote *The Holy Family*. One

year later, living in Brussels, they wrote that masterpiece, *The German Ideology*, which first appeared in print many years later. This work is very important for a proper study of Marxism. Here is what Marx himself wrote of this work:

". . . When in the spring of 1845 he [Engels—F.F.] also settled in Brussels, we resolved to work out together the opposition of our view to the ideological view of German philosophy, in fact to settle accounts with our previous philosophical conscience." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 357, International Publishers, New York.)

It was a thorough settlement of accounts, indeed: it utterly demolished the idealistic conceptions of the neo-Hegelians and laid the foundation for historical materialism. Marx's and Engels' genius and foresight may be gauged from a small quotation from this work which was written ninety-five years ago. Explaining the special character of the proletarian revolution, Marx and Engels wrote:

". . . Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society

anew." (*The German Ideology*, p. 69, International Publishers, New York.)

Every word of this has proved correct, beginning with the thesis that the ruling class does not yield voluntarily, and ending with the statement concerning the necessity of producing a communist consciousness. Many years after those lines were written, the working class in the Soviet Union has succeeded "in ridding itself of all the muck of ages," and has built up a new system of society.

Shortly after that, Marx and Engels wrote their immortal *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in which they laid the foundation of Scientific Socialism.

Engels always emphasized that Marx contributed the greater share to their joint work. In "The History of the Communist League" he wrote that when they met in Brussels in 1845, "Marx had already fully developed his materialist theory of history in its main features" (Cf. Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 11, International Publishers, New York). Still there is no doubt—and Marx pointed this out on many occasions—that Engels' contribution to their joint work was very considerable. As regards the relations between Marx and Engels the latter once wrote, in a letter to J. P. Becker (October 15, 1884):

"All my life I did what I was made for, namely, played second fiddle, and I believe that in this I was quite *passable*. And I was happy to have had such a first violin as Marx."

In the duet with Marx, Engels played the second violin, but he played it masterfully. The very fact that he played the second violin without a flaw, that he was capable of accompanying Marx, testifies to his greatness. It would be wrong, however, to construe this statement as meaning that Engels made no independent contribution to their joint work. Actually, Engels rendered Marx indispensable assistance, and after Marx's death he continued his work with all the skill of the master. If he played second fiddle, it was not because he lacked the necessary qualifications, but because Marx was such a mighty intellect that he surpassed even Engels.

The complete ideological unanimity and political agreement of these two great geniuses, the first leaders of the modern proletariat, was, in a way, an expression of the unity of the proletarian party. From their very first steps in the field of political activity, Marx and Engels began to lay the foundations of the revolutionary party of the proletariat. In all their life-long activity they always fought most resolutely for the unity and solidarity of this party, on the basis of Scientific Socialism. In their own unshakable unity—which stood every test and manifested itself in all the exigencies of life, in the most difficult political situation and in their work of solving the most complicated theoretical problems—they brilliantly anticipated that which Lenin and Stalin achieved under different conditions, viz., the absolute, iron unity of the international party of the



proletariat, based on the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism.

Engels was the son of a textile manufacturer in Rhenish Prussia, and, as is well known, was compelled to engage in commercial activity during most of his life. It was through his earnings in the commercial field that he made it possible for Marx to devote himself entirely to his scientific work. He relieved Marx of the worries of making a living, but thereby he took a heavy burden upon himself. We are profoundly touched when we read Marx's daughter's description of the day on which Engels at last freed himself of this treadmill.

"I shall never forget his triumphant tone as he said, 'For the last time,' when he was putting on his high boots before taking the last trip to the office of his firm. A few hours later, as we stood waiting for him at the gate, we saw him coming through the little open field leading to his cottage. He was swinging his cane, humming a tune and laughing heartily. Then we celebrated the occasion, drank champagne and were happy. I was too young at the time to understand, but when I think of it today, it is with tears." (Eleanor Marx-Aveling, *Frederick Engels*.)

Engels towered high above the social circles in which he was compelled to move. From his early youth he succeeded in freeing himself ideologically from bourgeois influence and throughout his life he was absolutely immune to the ideas and habits of the "business" world around him. More than that, he even succeeded in making use of

his business activity in order to obtain ever new material for the proletarian struggle. This alone shows his character and the power of his personality.

But the mighty creative force of this great intellect revealed itself primarily in his writings and in his activity in the proletarian movement. We gain an idea of Engels' significance as a thinker when we read his works. Moreover, an acquaintance with Engels' works is indispensable for a real study of Marxism. As Lenin once said:

"In order correctly to evaluate Marx's views, it is necessary to be acquainted with the works of his closest brother-in-ideas and collaborator, Frederick Engels. It is impossible to understand Marxism and to propound it fully without taking into account *all* the works of Engels." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, p. 58, International Publishers, New York.)

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Engels was an intellect encompassing a wide range of interests. He felt equally at home in dealing with philosophical, historical, economic and political problems. He was thoroughly acquainted with the natural sciences, physics, chemistry and biology, could brilliantly discuss questions of military science, was an able mathematician, and had a comprehensive knowledge of languages. Engels wielded a sharp pen. He never avoided a fight, but plunged into the struggle at every opportunity and often expressed his ideas in the form of trenchant and

brilliant polemics against the opponents of Scientific Socialism. Like Marx's works, all of Engels' writings are distinguished by the fact that they do not confine themselves to the theoretical elucidation of one particular question, but freely draw on practical experience and at the same time are intended to explain Scientific Socialism to the proletariat, to win the masses for the socialist cause.

"... We were by no means of the opinion," wrote Engels in his introduction to Marx's *Revelations about the Cologne Communist Trial*, "that the new scientific results should be confided in large tomes to the 'learned' world. Quite the contrary. . . . It was our duty to provide a scientific foundation for our view, but it was equally important for us to win over the European and in the first place the German proletariat to our convictions." (Cf. Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 12.)

This striving to provide a scientific foundation for their views and at the same time to win over the masses of the proletariat to the cause of socialism, to arm them for the struggle, runs like a thread through all of Marx's and Engels' activity. And they did, indeed, provide an unshakable scientific foundation for socialism, and at the same time created socialist working class parties in all the principal countries of Europe, won over the German proletariat to their conviction, and founded the First International.

When Engels died, in 1895, there already existed in all the industrial countries of Europe a widespread mass movement of the working

class, a movement which had adopted the Marxist viewpoint. Lenin was therefore justified in saying:

"... The services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed in a few words thus: they taught the working class to know itself and become class conscious, and they substituted science for dreaming." (V. I. Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, p. 51.)

This knowledge and consciousness of itself which Marxism taught the working class, and the scientific understanding imparted by Marxism, have become the basis of the struggle waged by the working class. They have been the weapons which helped the proletariat to win decisive victories. They were the means which Lenin and Stalin applied when they led Russia's working class in the great socialist October Revolution, and the peoples of the Soviet Union to the victory of socialism.

Lenin and Stalin converted socialism from a science into reality. Marx and Engels taught the working class to know itself and to be conscious of itself; Lenin and Stalin gave the working class confidence in its powers, faith, not only in the possibility of achieving victory, but also in its inevitability; they have shown how this victory can be achieved under the contemporary conditions of imperialism.

In this Lenin and Stalin proceed from the standpoint which Engels formulated as far back as 1847 in his polemic against Karl Heinzen:

"Communism is not a doctrine, but a *movement*; it does not proceed from principles but from *facts*. The Communists do not proceed from one or another particular philosophy, but from the whole previous history of humanity and especially from its actual results at present in all civilized countries.... Communism, in so far as it is a theory, is the theoretical expression of the position of the proletariat in this struggle [between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.—*F.F.*] and the theoretical resumé of the conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat."

Naturally, Engels does not mean to say that the proletariat has no definite world outlook, no definite philosophy. He merely explains that the Communists do not *proceed* from speculation, from a philosophy, but from the facts—those provided by the whole history of humanity. But these facts show that the history of all hitherto existing human society was filled with, and propelled by, the class struggle. These facts show that the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are the two main classes opposing each other in capitalist society, and that only the proletariat, by its revolutionary struggle, is capable of abolishing classes altogether. Thus, the scientific analysis of the facts of the history of hitherto existing society has produced a new theory of human society, a theory which is in accord with reality and is constantly confirmed by practical experience. This theory is based on the proper knowledge of the previous development of society and on a knowledge of the conditions for the

achievement and development of socialism.

But the method which Marx and Engels applied to the study of society—materialist dialectics—holds good in every other field of study. It is manifested in nature as well as it is revealed in human thought. Not only did Marx and Engels create and elaborate this method, not only did they join dialectics with materialism, but they applied this method in the most thorough-going manner.

"The thing that interested Marx and Engels most of all, the thing to which they contributed what was most essential and new, the thing that constituted the masterly advance they made in the history of revolutionary thought, was the application of materialist dialectics to the reshaping of all political economy, from its foundations up—to history, natural science, philosophy and to the policy and tactics of the working class." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, p. 44, International Publishers, New York.)

In the thousands of years of its history mankind has produced many great and keen thinkers. To be sure, we cannot simply compare Pythagoras with Newton, of Heraclitus with Hegel. Each of them worked in his own time, and, despite all his genius, could not reach out beyond the limits of his time. But the greatness of Marx and Engels lies precisely in the fact that the revolutionary movement of our times proceeds from and is based on all that mankind has produced to this day. For Marx and Engels did not merely add to the building; they freely



moved in the heights already attained by science, and opened up new vistas for it. They reached the point where they were able to explain the past and to give a broad outline of the future on the basis of scientific analysis. To achieve that, they not only had to know all the previous experience and concepts in the spheres of history, economic life and philosophy, but also to subject them to critical examination.

It is a well-known fact, and we have already emphasized it, that Engels was Marx's closest collaborator in all of the latter's works—philosophical, economical and political. But, in addition to this, Engels devoted special attention to the theoretical elaboration of human knowledge in a number of fields of investigation, since Marx could not find the time for a thorough study of those branches of science. These include primarily the natural sciences, a study of pre-capitalist formations, as well as questions of military science.

Engels applied materialist dialectics to natural science and thus often arrived at conclusions which were confirmed much later by experience. In 1885, Engels explained to the scientists:

"In any case natural science has now advanced so far that it can no longer escape the dialectical synthesis. But it will make this process easier for itself if it does not lose sight of the fact that the results in which its experiences are summarized are concepts; but that the art of working with concepts is not in-born and also is not given with

ordinary everyday consciousness, but requires real thought, and that this thought similarly has a long empirical history, not more and not less than empirical natural science. Only by learning to assimilate the results of the development of philosophy during the past two and a half thousand years will it be able to rid itself, on the one hand, of any isolated natural philosophy standing apart from it, outside it and above it, and, on the other hand, also of its own limited method of thought, which was its inheritance from English empiricism." (Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 19, International Publishers, New York.)

Only a few scientists in capitalist countries understood Engels' profound advice. And even those who did have not applied it fully. They still stick to empiricism, and they have developed an isolated natural philosophy. Thereby they have but hindered the complete and all-sided unfolding of the natural sciences. They have achieved new results with tremendous difficulty, and that only in so far as they involuntarily applied the dialectical method. But for this very reason they have themselves—whether in the case of Planck's quantum theory or the modern atomic theories—confirmed the correctness of the dialectical method and of Engels' advice.

Only in the Soviet Union the dialectical comprehension of natural science is being consciously advanced; only in the Soviet Union philosophy and the natural sciences have become one, an organic entity. And although twenty-three years represent a rather brief period of time, this fact has already brought

important results in all the branches of natural science. Science in the Soviet Union has got rid of the standpoint which Engels characterized as follows:

"Natural science, like philosophy, has hitherto entirely neglected the influence of men's activity on their thought; both know only nature on the one hand and thought on the other." (Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 172, International Publishers, New York.)

Ever since the existence of man, he has not only been influenced by nature, but himself has exerted an influence upon nature and brought about changes in it. In the Soviet Union, in the land of socialism, this influence is exerted consciously, this alteration of nature is brought about systematically, with the object of utilizing the forces of nature to an ever greater extent in the interests of man.

"But it is precisely *the alteration of nature by men*, not solely nature as such, which is the most essential and immediate basis of human thought, and it is in the measure that man has learned to change nature that his intelligence has increased." (*Ibid.*)

Ever since men became aware of this indisputable truth, which follows from the whole previous development, they have made their own intellectual development a part of their conscious and planned activity. Capitalism, which has become a fetter on the further devel-

opment of the productive forces and hinders men from subjecting the forces of nature to an ever greater extent, has at the same time become a system of society which strives to keep the masses in ever greater ignorance. Socialism, which opens up all the sluices for the conquest of the forces of nature, is at the same time a system of society which makes possible and ensures the further tempestuous development of the human intellect.

Engels had no chance to complete his *Dialectics of Nature*, because after Marx's death he was busy preparing for publication Volumes II and III of Marx's *Capital*. But the outline of the book and the rough drafts and notes alone testify to Engels' profound knowledge of the subject. Engels was neither a physicist nor a chemist. He made no experiments and tests. Yet in all his works and investigations dealing with motion and its laws, electricity, heat, attraction and repulsion—in all his studies—his thought led him to correct conclusions. For this thought was based on all the previously known facts and followed the lines of materialist dialectics. That is precisely what constitutes the greatness of Engels, who was able to tell the scientists in his witty way:

"And if these gentlemen have for years caused quality and quantity to be transformed into one another, without knowing what they did, then they will have to console themselves with Molière's Monsieur Jourdain who had spoken prose all his life without having the slightest inkling of it." (*Ibid.*, p. 34.)

The most recent findings of scientific investigation have served to confirm still more forcefully the correctness of the laws of dialectical materialism and Engels' brilliant foresight. This might be illustrated by dozens of examples. We shall cite here only a few.

The professional physicists of Engels' day ridiculed Engels when he declared that in all nature, including physical phenomena, development is proceeding by leaps; however, a few years after Engels' death the physicist Planck proved that even the accumulation and expenditure of energy, which had formerly been regarded as an even process, is taking place in the form of leaps. Still later it was proved that the changes in the atoms are also taking place in the form of leaps, with the electrons—under specific conditions—changing from one orbit to another.

Engels declared that: "*Motion is the mode of existence of matter.*" (*Anti-Dühring.*) Five years after Engels' death the German physicist Kaufmann confirmed by experiments the correctness of the theory developed by Lorentz, according to which the mass of the electrons—the minutest components of the atom—varies with their velocity. Thus it has been proved that matter and motion represent an indissoluble entity—a fact which later became an essential part of Einstein's theory of relativity.

Finally, it is an indisputable fact today that quantitative changes lead to qualitative differences, and that therefore the physical principles which are true of the bodies

surrounding us cannot be mechanically applied to the smaller world of the atom, and still less to the nucleus of 'the atom. The entire modern science of physics is based on this, today universally recognized, axiom.

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Just as the Marxian method enabled Engels to show the way to the natural sciences, so it likewise enabled him to analyze the military science of his day and to discover the laws of its further development. To be sure, in Engels' time great changes had already taken place in the art of warfare, in the armies, and, consequently, in strategy and tactics. But those changes were insignificant as compared with the changes that have taken place since. Engels' genius therefore becomes all the more apparent when we read the following lines which he wrote as far back as 1852, that is, eighty-eight years ago:

"Modern warfare therefore presupposes the emancipation of the bourgeoisie and the peasants; it is the *military expression* of this emancipation.

"The emancipation of the proletariat will also have its own military expression, it will produce a new and special method of warfare. *Cela est clair.* It is even possible to determine beforehand the nature of the material basis for this new method of warfare. . . .

"But just as in regard to industry the proletarian revolution will not be confronted with the problem of abolishing steam-driven machines but of increasing them, so in regard to warfare it will be a question not of detracting from the mass char-



acter and mobility of the armies, but of enhancing them."

The bourgeois revolution produced the mass army. Capitalism has provided them with ever new kinds of weapons. The weapons, however, the instruments of war, determine the military tactics. The latter is therefore subject to constant change. The bourgeois world, which up to a certain point is in a position to apply these innovations and put them into effect, reaches a point beyond which it cannot go; it is confronted with the necessity of deploying the army on an ever larger mass scale, to enlist the workers and peasants and train them in face of the constant danger that these new recruits may turn the new weapons against the bourgeoisie. Caught in this dangerous contradiction, it either refrains from further developing its own army along modern lines (a classical example of this is furnished by contemporary capitalist France), or seeks for a way out in the most intensified development of the army accompanied by the most sanguinary suppression of the masses of the people. There can be no doubt whatever that in both cases the bourgeoisie cannot prevent the proletariat from stamping its imprint upon the modern armies and from turning them in the long run into a weapon in its own hands.

The working class of Russia put Engels' forecast into effect in regard to the tsarist army. In the Soviet Union, the Red Army is developing in line with Engels' forecast on the proletarian method of warfare. The

mass character and mobility of the army has not diminished but has been enhanced. The Red Army is mechanized to an unprecedented extent, and its mechanization is constantly increasing. It is an army of the working people in every sense of the term. And this fact finds expression in its weapons, as well as in its aims, in its strategy and tactics. The Red Army presents a picture of complete harmony between its character as defender of the interests of the people and its form as mass army with an exceptionally high degree of mechanization.

To be sure, there exist highly mechanized mass armies which are instruments in the hands of the bourgeoisie. But that only goes to prove that the change in the character of the army is not a mechanical process, that the character of an army is determined, not by its form, but by its content, i.e., by the class which it serves.

The big capitalist factories are also in the hands of the bourgeoisie. But the collective form of production which was ushered in by, and is characteristic of, the big capitalist factories must bring about the collapse and abolition of private appropriation. The working class, which derives from collective production, develops it further along socialist lines.

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We have already pointed out that Engels made a great creative contribution to all branches of knowledge. Here we shall only mention his scientific historical works, such as the unique *Origin of the Family*,

*Private Property and the State, and The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man.* Engels thereby placed a sharp weapon in the hands of the proletariat, because he showed how the development of mankind is really proceeding, demonstrated the decisive role of the class struggle, demolished the lie about the permanence of the capitalist system of society, and brilliantly refuted all religious superstitions.

There is not a single important question of theory and politics which Engels did not investigate; and in regard to all of them Engels—as a rule, together with Marx—arrived at conclusions which are correct to this day and which have been confirmed by subsequent events. The important point in this connection is that Engels never indulged in guesswork, but all his conclusions were the result of profound thinking based on comprehensive knowledge. This is proved by all of Engels' writings, without exception. The more one knows Engels' works, and the more one reads them over and over again, the more one appreciates the greatness of this man. In his work Engels followed the principle which he laid down for the leaders of the proletariat in his "Prefatory Note to *The Peasant War in Germany*":

"It is in particular the duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world outlook, and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, since

it has become a science, must be pursued as a science, i.e., it must be studied." (Cf. Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, pp. 548-49.)

It would be wrong, and unjust to Engels, to represent him in such light as if he himself had not undergone a process of development. The very opposite is the case. The earliest works written by Engels already bear the stamp of his genius. But he neither considered himself a superman—nothing human was alien to him—nor did he ever stop at the stage once achieved. He studied and developed intellectually all his life. He did not rest content with the once acquired knowledge of the line which society follows in its development, but constantly strove to buttress and concretize it by ever greater knowledge.

Engels knew how to learn from his own mistakes and from the mistakes of the class with which he identified himself.

In their struggle Marx and Engels conceded the possibility of mistakes, but they maintained that the mistakes can be overcome as a result of activity, for "a large class, like a great nation, never learns better or quicker than by undergoing the consequences of its own mistakes." (Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Preface to American edition, written in 1892, p. XIX.)

It goes without saying, however, that Engels did not conclude from this that one could assume a liberal attitude toward mistakes and blunders. Quite the contrary. He was merciless in his fight against every mistake, he lashed out ruthlessly

against all the open and disguised enemies of Marxism, and castigated all the opportunists who, during the last years of Engels' life, raised their heads ever higher in the German Social-Democratic movement and, as we well know, did not hesitate to falsify the teachings of Marx and Engels. All his life Engels waged a principled and irreconcilable struggle against opportunism in all its manifestations and against the opportunists of all shades. Engels showed that only by fighting against all errors can the great proletarian class learn to overcome mistakes and avoid making new ones.

Engels possessed an immense power of conviction. His conviction derived its strength not only from his extraordinary intellectual gifts and his vast knowledge, but also from his intimate connection with the working class. Already in the case of his first large work, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, he pointed out in his preface to that work that he had lived in the midst of the working class in order to study the real conditions. In a later preface to this work, written in 1892, Engels stated:

"The bourgeoisie have made further progress in the art of hiding the distress of the working class." (*Ibid.*, p. VIII.)

By practicing this art the bourgeoisie succeeded in misleading many who shut their eyes to the real state of affairs. Engels taught the working class to discern reality behind the smokescreen of dema-

gogy and deception. This is all the more necessary at present when, as we know, the bourgeoisie has perfected "the art of hiding the distress of the working class" and made it a system. We know that today the bourgeoisie resorts to phrases about "socialism" in order to deceive the workers; that it speaks of a "socialism standing above classes" in order to keep the workers from the class struggle for real socialism, for the only possible kind of socialism—achieved and practiced by the working class. Engels aptly characterized these subterfuges in the following words written in 1892:

"... today, the very people who, from the 'impartiality' of their superior standpoint, preach to the workers a socialism soaring high above their class interests and class struggles, and tending to reconcile in a higher humanity the interests of both the contending classes—these people are either neophytes, who have still to learn a great deal, or they are the worst enemies of the workers—wolves in sheep's clothing." (*Ibid.*, p. X.)

Today they are no longer neophytes, but the worst enemies of the working class. But, on the other hand, socialism today is no longer just a theory, it has become a forceful reality. The struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries has become sharper and more difficult, but the weapons wielded by the workers have become incomparably more powerful. That is why the wolves in sheep's clothing meet with the ever more deter-



mined resistance of the working class.

Lenin and Stalin upheld the legacy of Marx and Engels, put their teachings into effect and developed them further. What Engels demanded of the proletarian revolution nearly a hundred years ago has in the main been accomplished in the Soviet Union.

Socialism has triumphed in one country—a fact which Engels could not have foreseen in the particular form in which this has been accom-

plished. As Stalin said in his speech in reply to the discussion at the Fifteenth All-Union Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1926:

“Surely, if Engels were alive today he would not cling to the old formula, but, on the contrary, would welcome our revolution wholeheartedly, and would say: ‘To hell with all the old formulas; long live the victorious revolution in the U.S.S.R.’ ”

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## THE WAR AND THE URBAN MIDDLE STRATA

BY P. VIDAL

**B**ETWEEN the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the two classes in capitalist society that stand opposed to each other in complete antagonism, waver the broad mass of the middle strata, swayed by the contradictions of their position. They constitute the majority of the population even in the most advanced capitalist countries. This confused majority is made up of diverse social groups: middle peasants and small peasants, artisans and small traders, innkeepers and small rentiers, engineers and public servants, teachers and doctors, lawyers and writers—a variegated mixture of divergent elements who apparently have nothing in common.

Actually, however, they hold a common position in production and society which continuously shows through all their differences. They are either small producers, and as such are bound by their tiny enterprises to bourgeois society, or they are salaried employees, and as such are bound to the bourgeoisie by their relatively secure incomes, their diverse small privileges and, above all, by their hope of rising in the social scale.

On the other hand, they are oppressed and exploited by the capitalist system, without their perceiving the true causes of their oppressed and exploited condition. Their small property obscures their vision, their hope of advancement blinds their eyes. The dividing line between them and the bourgeoisie is vague and fluctuating, but so is the dividing line between them and the proletariat. As a matter of fact, broad petty-bourgeois strata tend to merge with the proletariat, while a thin stratum tends to coalesce with the bourgeoisie. It is nevertheless one of the outstanding features of the petty bourgeoisie that it is desperately anxious to mark itself off from the proletariat, while at the same time striving to blur its upper boundaries as much as possible.

Lenin pointed out that this *intermediate* position between the two big antagonistic classes of modern society, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat,

“ . . . necessarily determines the specific character of the petty bourgeoisie, its duality, its twofold nature, its attraction towards the minority [the bourgeoisie—P.V.], which has emerged successively

from the struggle, and its hostile attitude towards the 'failures,' i.e., the majority." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 79. Russian ed.)

Fluctuating between the two classes, in which all the contradictions of the capitalist world are accumulated, the middle strata are an important factor in determining the relative strength of the forces of capitalism and of socialism at any given moment. The *decisive* struggle will be fought between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, but in this struggle the middle strata may serve as the pointer on the scales.

In his article, "The October Revolution and the Problem of the Middle Strata," Joseph Stalin wrote:

"The problem of the middle strata is undoubtedly one of the fundamental problems of a workers' revolution. The middle strata are made up of the peasantry and the petty working tradesfolk of the towns. Under this category must also be classed the oppressed nationalities, nine-tenths of which consist of middle strata. . . . The proletariat cannot even seriously contemplate seizing power unless these strata have at least been neutralized, unless these strata have already become divorced from the capitalist class and unless in their mass they no longer constitute an army of capital." (J. V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 185, International Publishers, New York.)

It requires profound social upheavals to shift the center of gravity within the middle strata from the bourgeoisie towards the proletariat. There has been no lack of such up-

heavals since the World War of 1914-18. Time and again have the petty-bourgeois masses been drawn into the vortex of revolutionary events, they have been driven more and more implacably to political activity. Now they, too, have been plunged into all the horrors of the second imperialist war, the war which is shaking not only the foundations of cities, factories and docks, but also the very foundations of bourgeois society.

The war, which has wrought profound changes in the life of the masses, is also dislodging the middle strata from their customary course of life, and hence necessarily from their customary habits of thought. We shall not endeavor in this article to examine how the war has affected the peasants, but shall confine ourselves to describing its direct and indirect effects on the urban middle strata.

The urban middle strata, and above all the intelligentsia, hailed the war of 1914 with real jubilation; they were enthusiastic for the war, intoxicated by chauvinism and fantastic hopes. It is quite different in the present war. The urban middle strata contemplated the approach of this war with deep misgivings, they regarded its outbreak as a frightful calamity, and it was with the greatest reluctance that they took to arms. This change of attitude is not only to be attributed to the experiences of the first imperialist war; it is also due to the far-reaching changes that have since taken place in the social status of the middle strata.

It is true that even before the



first World War, many artisans and small masters were ruined by the development of capitalism, but the urban middle strata as a whole were able successfully to maintain their position. In spite of the concentration of capital, in spite of the accumulation of wealth at the one pole and of poverty at the other, the middle strata at that time lost nothing either in numbers or in social weight. Apart from the numerous artisans who somehow managed to keep body and soul together, and whom even capitalism that was passing into monopoly needed, there was a tremendous increase in the number of salaried employees. They represented a new type of urban middle strata. They were exploited by capital just as the workers were, but they differed from the latter by the fact that they received regular monthly salaries, by their intermediate position in the process of production, and by their hope of rising to the ranks of the bourgeoisie.

These salaried employees have been aptly called "white-collar proletarians," a term which describes their dual status not at all badly. Social realities made them proletarians, but social appearances separated them from the proletariat. To appear to be more than they really are is in the nature of most salaried employees. In spite of their manifold differentiation, the urban middle strata developed a more or less common petty-bourgeois ideology, whose quintessence Lenin defined in the following words:

"These constant vacillations between the old and the new, this

curious striving for the impossible, that is, to rise above all classes, constitute the essence of every *kleinbürger philosophy*." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 296, Russian ed.)

The petty-bourgeois is fond of regarding himself as an individual. This predilection for individuality was expressive of the small master's protest against big enterprise, the protest of the isolated and seemingly "independent" working man against the socialization of the proletariat by industrial production, a protest against the obscure powers of capitalist society which rode roughshod over the individual. It was capitalism, as Lenin pointed out, that was the first to make this "protest of the individual" (*Ibid.*, p. 366) possible, but the protesting "individual" was not aware of the connection. This protest was just as dual as the class status of the petty bourgeois; it combined a *reactionary* rejection of the continuously progressing social development with the mute *rebellion* of human dignity against the dehumanizing effects of capitalism. No less important a place than individuality in the petty-bourgeois ideology were held by the notions of order and security. These notions were likewise marked by the duality characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie: on the one hand, they were an expression of the reactionary wish that everything remain as of old, that nothing be changed or revolutionized; on the other hand, they were an expression of a deep-seated suspicion that capitalism had only a deceptive "security" to offer, that it could not assure the petty

bourgeoisie a lasting and stable existence.

The middle strata approved of capitalism, but at the same time they were aware of its cloven hoof; they therefore demanded that it rid itself of its "deformities," that it become a capitalism of the petty bourgeoisie, in other words, that it cease to be capitalism and at the same time continue to be capitalism. Lenin pointed to this contradictory attitude when he said:

"Hostile towards capitalism, the small producers represent a transitional class, one that tends to merge with the bourgeoisie, and therefore is incapable of understanding that the big capital it so dislikes is not something fortuitous, but a direct product of the entire modern economic (and social, political and legal) system, resulting from the struggle of mutually antagonistic social forces." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, p. 228, Russian ed.)

The small producers, who are bound together only by the market, and the salaried employees and the intellectuals, who for the most part have no direct part in social production, considered the root of the evil to lie not in the relations of production, but in money, in the banks, in the capitalist finance system. They confused the outward symptoms of the disease with the disease itself, and believed that the organism could be cured by removing its fever spots.

Thus, even before the first World War, there was a vague anti-capitalist sentiment among the middle strata, but it was negligible com-

pared with the firm belief of the petty bourgeois masses in the necessity and durability of the capitalist system. It was with this belief that they confidently entered the first imperialist war.

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The profound crisis of capitalism, which was revealed in the first imperialist war and which grew still more acute after the war, gave a severe shock to the middle strata. The majority of the petty bourgeoisie had not only shed their blood, but had also lost their savings. They suffered the pangs of hunger and could find no permanent employment. Their families were broken up. Their ideals had been scattered to the winds. On the other hand, they saw the war profiteers, the capitalist speculators, shamelessly piling up wealth. Thrown out of their customary course of life, embittered by their own poverty and by the ostentatious wealth of the capitalist parasites, broad sections of the petty bourgeois masses were drawn closer to the working class and looked towards Social-Democracy for a readjustment of social relations and the creation of a new order and security. This influx of the urban middle strata into the Social-Democratic movement was strongest of all in the countries that had suffered most from the war crisis—in Germany, in the countries of the former Hapsburg monarchy, and in Italy.

But the petty bourgeois who had been thus stirred into action was disillusioned by the policy of the Social-Democrats. Under Social-

Democratic leadership, the working class was unable to win the following of the middle strata and to mobilize them for the struggle against capitalism. It is true that the Social-Democratic parties managed to retain the allegiance of petty bourgeois voters even in the period of capitalism's temporary stabilization, but the great majority of the urban middle strata deserted them. In the "victor" countries, the petty bourgeoisie continued as heretofore to follow the bourgeois parties, or, as in France, formed its own petty bourgeois parties, which, however, were also dominated by the big bourgeois.

In Germany, the urban middle strata partly followed the reactionary nationalist parties and partly split up into various political groups. Stirred up again by the inflation in Germany in 1923, part of the petty bourgeoisie joined a new movement, which combined anti-capitalist with nationalist demagoguery and which furthered the interests of finance capital by new methods. This reactionary movement, which temporarily subsided in the period of temporary capitalist stabilization, was the herald of future developments among the petty-bourgeois masses.

In the period of capitalism's Indian summer, from 1923 to 1929, the urban middle classes were to some extent able to recover their internal "stability." They recovered their confidence in capitalism, which tempted them with prospects of greater prosperity obtainable by peaceful means, and promised them a golden age in which crises and

wars would be unknown. And although in this period of rationalization, finance capital crushed the existence of many petty bourgeois, it was nevertheless able to guarantee large numbers of the urban middle strata a tolerable existence, and infect them with profound illusions.

This interlude ended with "Black Friday" on the New York Stock Exchange, in the convulsive throes of the world economic crisis. Things went from bad to worse. Artisans and small tradesmen were compelled to shut down their businesses and were faced by stark ruin. Hundreds of thousands, and later millions, of salaried employees were flung onto the streets. Engineers without jobs, doctors without practice, teachers without classes, actors without engagements and painters without commissions joined the mass of unemployed proletarians in the desperate struggle for bare existence. Each tried to find some sort of job, however wretched. Bitterness, hopelessness and despair reigned supreme. A grim dance of death swept through the capitalist world.

The anti-capitalist sentiments of the middle strata gained in elemental force. But this petty bourgeois anti-capitalism had no suspicion of the real causes of the universal misery. The force of its rage was turned against incidentals: against the pawn-broker with whom the petty bourgeois pledged his last winter overcoat, against the usurer who lent him money at extortionate interest, against the lurid corruption of individual capitalist adventurers;



against the big department stores which ousted the small traders, against the banks, in which the petty bourgeois masses saw the villainess of capitalism in its worst forms. They did not turn their eyes towards capitalist production; all they saw was the capitalist facade, which, they cried, must be torn down.

A united working class under revolutionary leadership would have been able to turn this justified but misdirected incensement of the impoverished middle strata into a real revolutionary force. But the working class was split, the Social-Democratic parties themselves shared responsibility for the sordid deeds of capitalism, and their one concern was to save the shattered capitalist system. And so the proletariat was unable to exert the required force of attraction on the insurgent petty bourgeois. The result was that the agents of finance capital, who knew the petty bourgeoisie and deliberately gave confused expression to its confused sentiments, succeeded in converting the indignation of the petty bourgeois into a powerful force of counter-revolution, and, in the countries where the crisis was most severe, to save capitalism under a mask of anti-capitalism.

That the petty bourgeois masses at that time stood at the crossroads, that it was not "inevitable" that they should have fallen under counter-revolutionary influence (as the Social-Democratic "theoreticians," shrugging their shoulders, claimed) was shown in the period of the Popular Front in France. Undoubtedly, the petty bourgeoisie experi-

ence certain inhibitions with regard to the proletariat; but these inhibitions can be overcome; they need not result in the petty bourgeois masses, in their state of extreme ferment, turning their attack, not on the bourgeoisie, but on the proletariat.

In France, too, the middle strata, shaken by the crisis of capitalism, wavered, inclined for a time towards the *Croix de Feu*; but the united action of the working class won them over to the side of the workers, to the struggle against finance capital as personified in the Two Hundred Families. The old petty bourgeois "protest of the individual" became a protest against the oppressive dictatorship of a thin upper stratum, a protest against the oppression of the people by a reactionary band of robbers, a protest against the inhumanity and barbarity of decaying capitalism. The petty bourgeois longing for order turned into an aspiration for a new order, an order established by the people themselves, that would put an end to the filthy system that posed as capitalist "order." The need for security became a longing to escape from the monstrous insecurity inherent in every reactionary system, and to bring about real security for the people and for peace by means of an alliance between the working class and the other working masses. The Popular Front was destroyed by the treachery of the petty bourgeois and Social-Democratic politicians, but it remains impressed on the memories of the masses as a proof of the possibility of an alliance between the

working class and the middle strata against the dark forces of finance capital.

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The profound crisis of capitalism started a process of change among the middle strata which has by no means ceased yet. Revolutionary workers do not cherish the illusion that the petty bourgeois can cease to be a petty bourgeois in capitalist society, that he will cease to vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. His small enterprise, his isolated position in the process of production, his hundreds of ties with the bourgeoisie are bound to give rise to vacillation in the petty bourgeois, to illusions as regards capitalism, and inhibitions as regards the proletariat. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the anti-capitalist sentiments of the middle strata are becoming ever more earnest, that large numbers of petty bourgeois no longer regard socialism as a bug-bear but as a real likelihood of social transformation, that in many of them the conviction is growing that socialism would imply for them too a secure and human existence, full of bright promise for the future, an existence which capitalism can never offer them.

In spite of their undeniably still persisting fear of the dictatorship of the proletariat, whose democratic nature they do not understand, their minds are not unaffected by the rapid development of the Soviet intelligentsia, and they are gradually realizing that socialism offers hitherto unsuspected prospects for

all men with specialized knowledge. And, lastly, many of the prejudices of the petty bourgeois against the working class are beginning to disappear: the middle strata have had many an opportunity to convince themselves with what devotion and determination the workers champion the interests of the whole people, with what eagerness and self-sacrifice they support every fight for national liberation, with what purity and grandeur they personify the true dignity of the nation.

We must bear in mind all these experiences of the middle strata if we are to understand their position in the present war and to foresee the great upheavals that the war is bound to cause in their thoughts and sentiments. For the petty-bourgeois masses this war is a calamity, and was felt by them to be such from the day of its outbreak. They no longer identified themselves with their imperialists as they did in 1914. They no longer regarded the imperialist war as their own cause, but as a calamity imposed upon them against their will.

It is true that in the belligerent imperialist states they still feel that there is nothing to be done but to exert their utmost energies for the achievement of victory in order to save the nation from direst misery and deepest slavery. But this feeling is being undermined by the importunate questions: How long will it last? How will it all end? Will not everything perish in a frightful holocaust, in utter annihilation? The longer the war lasts, the greater the sacrifices on both

sides, the less the prospects and the smaller the illusions that imperialism will be able to lead the nations out of this carnage. And what escape is there for the working people in the occupied countries, in which everything is overwhelmed in misery, and starvation is growing apace?

In these countries, the ground has slipped from under the feet of the middle strata. Economically ruined, stricken to the very roots of their existence, their national sentiments deeply wounded, they are dragging out a wretched mockery of existence. They have witnessed the collapse of all illusions, the shameless treachery of the bourgeoisie, the wretched cowardice of the bourgeois and "Socialist" politicians, the rottenness of the state and of the whole system, the illusoriness of all official "ideals." They are stunned, dazed, bewildered, sickened and still almost incapable of grasping what has happened. They will emerge from this bewilderment. They will come to realize what has happened. Driven by anger and want, they will be stirred into action to seek a way out, they will turn hither and thither in their search for an avenue of escape, and will be capable of deeds of unparalleled senselessness, or, on the contrary, of profound historical sense.

In all countries it is the urban middle strata that are feeling the full weight of the war. The bourgeoisie manages to escape the worst of the war's horrors, the proletariat finds support in its organization and its solidarity—but the petty bour-

geois stands facing the great social catastrophe alone. He is deeply aware of his impotence and helplessness. Taxation weighs heavily on his household, on his small shop or his modest workshop. While his income is diminishing, prices for necessities are rising. And while the big concerns are reaping profits on the war, the artisan and the small shopkeeper is going from bad to worse; there are no government contracts and subsidies for him, he gets no preference as regards goods and raw materials.

The intellectuals are in no better plight. Their professions have in many cases become superfluous; they are by no means "indispensable" and have lost their customary social support. As they do not represent a force of military value, their voice is deliberately ignored by the ruling classes. It is no mere chance that it is chiefly among the middle strata that the "grouchers and malcontents" are to be found, for they have no other way of expressing their dissatisfaction. Nor is it a mere chance that anti-war sentiments are gaining ground among the intellectuals with relative rapidity; their anger at the deterioration of their economic and social conditions is mingled with disgust at the barbarities that war brings in its train. The nightly air raids, the ceaseless explosions, the constant necessity of taking refuge in bomb shelters, the systematic destruction of cities are all telling on the nerves of the middle strata, whose moral powers of resistance are far inferior to those of the proletariat.



Lastly, it should not be forgotten how deeply rooted national sentiments are among the petty bourgeoisie. For the bourgeoisie, the nation is in most cases nothing but a signboard for capitalist interests; but for the petty bourgeois the nation is something real—the only collective body in which the individual finds escape from his isolation. The worker's consciousness of belonging to a great class—the international class of the proletariat—is and must remain foreign to the petty bourgeois. For him, the nation is the all-embracing community. And for this very reason the war is a cause of new shocks to the middle strata.

In a number of countries it is now common knowledge that the interests of the bourgeoisie have nothing in common with the interests of the nation, that, using the nation as a cloak, the imperialists perpetrate acts of unparalleled treachery against the masses. In such countries the national sentiments of the petty bourgeoisie may become a revolutionizing force; true, they may just as easily become a reserve of counter-revolution. At any rate, in this war, in contradistinction to the war of 1914-18, the national sentiments of the petty bourgeoisie are a factor on which the bourgeoisie cannot rely blindly, a factor which harbors the possibility of becoming a weapon against capital.

In this period of profound upheaval it is one of the most important duties of the working class to do its utmost to prevent this mass of incensed and unorganized people who have been driven from their

customary course from taking a false turn, and to get them to march shoulder to shoulder with the proletariat along the path of revolutionary struggle. These shocks, this unparalleled misery into which the petty bourgeois masses have been plunged, are bound to release tremendous energies. The bourgeoisie will do everything in its power to harness these energies to its own ends, to lead them astray by chauvinist, anti-Marxist and "anti-capitalist" demagoguery. The working class must therefore grasp the fact that the question of an alliance with the middle strata is now more acute than ever, and that the struggle to determine the future orientation of these masses, who have been torn from all their old connections, is of the utmost importance.

In this respect, too, Social-Democratism must be vanquished in the ranks of the proletariat. On the one hand, the Social-Democratic parties opened their doors indiscriminately to petty bourgeois elements, allowed them to acquire predominant influence in their press and organizations, and in the end handed the leadership over to them, thus infecting the working class movement with the bourgeois ideology and rendering it subject to all the vacillations, weaknesses and capitulatory tendencies of the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, Social-Democratic parties never really treated the problem of the middle strata seriously; they regarded the petty bourgeois masses only as welcome voters in the elections, and every time they showed any signs of rebellion, treated them

with hostile misunderstanding. Thus, the Social-Democratic parties associated with the petty bourgeoisie only in so far as it represented a factor of capitalist order, and recoiled from the petty bourgeois masses as soon as they rose up in indignation against the prevailing system.

But just the opposite is required to achieve a real alliance between the working class and the middle strata. The proletariat must not allow petty bourgeois influences to penetrate into its ranks, or its policy to be affected by the irresoluteness, changeability and instability of the petty bourgeoisie. At the same time, the proletariat must not regard the middle strata as chance, even though welcome, supporters, but as genuine, even though vacillating, allies, whose profoundest interests are identical with those of the working class. Since they have not been organized and disciplined by the process of production, the middle strata are liable to fall into panic; they therefore need the resolute firmness of the proletariat. They are inclined to precipitate action, and therefore need the sober judgment of the proletariat. They tend towards capitulation, and therefore need the steeled fighting determination and revolutionary purposefulness of the proletariat. It is therefore the mission of the working class to be the leading force, showing the tormented middle strata the way out of the sufferings and boundless miseries of the war and helping them to take this way by means of struggle. In spite of all their backslidings to the bour-

geoisie, the non-proletarian and semi-proletarian masses:

"... cannot but recognize the moral and political authority of the proletariat, which not only overthrows the exploiters and suppresses their resistance, but also builds new, higher social connections, social discipline: . . ." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 434. International Publishers, New York.)

In the socialist Soviet Union the workers have furnished historical proof of their ability to do this.

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Everything today is in the state of movement and flux. In the U.S.A., we find large numbers of farmers, artisans, salaried employees and intellectuals joining with the workers in a militant movement to prevent America entering the imperialist war. In France, and the other countries occupied by Germany, defeat is associated in the minds of the impoverished middle strata with the treachery of the bourgeoisie, and the salvation of the nation with the struggle of the working class, in which latter the force of national regeneration is embodied. In England and Germany there is a growing longing for peace among the middle strata and a justified fear that the bourgeoisie is incapable of leading the people out of the war.

In those countries which are still only on the verge of war and stand in trembling fear of being plunged into it overnight, ever broader sections of the petty bourgeoisie look towards the Soviet Union as the only world power of peace. That

capitalism means war and that socialism is the only real guarantee of peace is a truth to which even the middle strata can no longer close their eyes. True, the majority of them are still not prepared to think this idea out to its logical conclusion. They are being torn by conflicting emotions. They still cling to the old prejudices, to the rotten spars of an ideology which reflects their connection with the bourgeoisie, with capitalism. They still keep closing their eyes to the fact that it is capitalism, which they used to regard as the protector of their property, their security and their individuality, which is robbing them of their property, completely undermining their security and ruthlessly trampling on their individuality. They still cherish the hope, pale and feeble though it may be, of still finding a way back to that irretrievable past when capitalism was not yet marked with the brand of death.

But the working class will not lose patience. It will bear in mind the words uttered by Georgi Dimitroff at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International:

"These masses must be taken as they are, and not as we should like

to have them. It is only in the process of struggle that they will overcome their doubts and waverings. It is only by a patient attitude towards their inevitable waverings, it is only with the political support of the proletariat, that they will be able to rise up to a higher level of revolutionary consciousness and activity."

The war is ruthlessly hammering home its lessons. By changing the old mode of life, it is forcefully changing the old thoughts and sentiments. With grim thoroughness it is turning every issue into one of life and death. And it is as an issue of life and death that the middle strata have to decide whether they shall, by continuing to support capitalism, enable the bourgeoisie to go on dragging the people through war and poverty, to go on shattering and devastating countries and bringing about a universal system of oppression and degeneration, or whether they are prepared to support the struggle of the working class against the imperialist war and its capitalist initiators, and together with the proletariat to lay the foundations of a life of work and peace, of liberty and human dignity.



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## THE IMPERIALIST WAR AND THE PEASANTRY

BY E. HÖRNLE

**T**HE second imperialist war has been in progress for over a year, and the end is not yet in sight. It has caused untold misery and hardships to the working people of town and country.

The peasant masses are called upon to bear far greater suffering in this war than in the first imperialist World War. The ravages caused to agriculture are far more devastating now than they were then, and the war measures in the various countries far more extensive and incisive.

But the peasantry today is different from what it was in 1914. Since the first imperialist war, the peasant masses of the colonies and semi-colonies, as well as the peasantry of the foremost capitalist countries, have undergone a profound development. The two wars were separated by a period of powerful national liberation movements and struggles of the peoples of the colonial countries, as well as of accelerated development of a revolutionary proletariat in these countries.

In the capitalist countries themselves, the dislocation of the world economic mechanism, caused by the first imperialist war and which since then has been continuously in-

creasing, coupled with the "colossal super-profits" (Lenin) of the monopolies, have reduced agriculture in particular to a state of chronic stagnation and retrogression, leading to the accelerated impoverishment of vast numbers of peasants and farmers in both hemispheres. The mass of the peasantry are beginning to seek new ways and to look upon the militant working class with new eyes.

These changes in the habits of life and thought of the peasantry are of the utmost significance, for the overwhelming majority of the population of the world consists even today, after one hundred and fifty years of capitalist development, of peasants, of semi-peasant agricultural laborers and their families.

In China alone, whose total population at the beginning of the predatory Japanese war was officially estimated at 426,600,000, about 300,000,000 live directly by the cultivation of the soil.

In India, the total population was estimated in 1938 at about 375,000,000, of whom, according to official statistics, at least 71 per cent gained their livelihood by agricultural labor.

But even in the developed capi-

talist countries the peasantry comprise a considerable proportion of the working population. In the U.S.A., for instance, in 1930, of a total of 48,000,000 gainfully employed persons, about 11,000,000 were engaged in agriculture or forestry.

The number of persons employed in agriculture in Europe (without the U.S.S.R.) in 1939 was estimated by the Agrarian Department of the League of Nations at 74,800,000. According to the same authority, the total agricultural population of Europe numbers 177,000,000 persons. In Japan, even today, practically half the total population still live by agricultural labor.

These masses constitute the most important potential reserves of the world proletariat. It is from these rural masses that the workers of the cities are continuously replenished. It is from these rural masses that the overwhelming majority of recruits are drawn for the armies that are slaughtering each other today in this second imperialist war. And these masses are being stirred more and more into action by their own experience in the general crisis of capitalism. Their eyes opened by the frightful burden of imperialist spoliation and oppression, of war economy and war atrocities, they are beginning to look upon capitalism as their enemy and upon the working class as their most reliable ally. Events themselves, their own sufferings and their struggles for better conditions of life are hammering into their minds the understanding that only in alliance with the working class can the peasant masses

find a way of escape from their wretched plight. This brings them closer to the proletariat and leads them to support the latter's struggle against the imperialist war and its imperialist instigators. And the proletariat regards these peasant masses as its most valuable allies.

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The stupendous upheavals and sacrifices of the war naturally weigh heaviest of all on the working masses of those countries which are today theaters of military operations or which have been occupied by the enemy. Most disastrous of all is the plight of the workers and peasants of France.

We have only to read what the Minister of Agriculture in the Pétain government said at the beginning of August regarding the state of French agriculture both in the occupied and unoccupied zones. The following is taken from a report of the Minister's speech which appeared in the *Action Française* on August 11, 1940:

"In 1919 our livestock was annihilated in the war zone and seriously reduced in the interior. Nevertheless, we had many opportunities of repairing the damage, for the import of frozen meat enabled us to spare our own livestock. It is true that today our livestock in the unoccupied zone has not suffered as the result of military operations, but a large proportion must be requisitioned in order to provide meat for the refugees and the soldiers. In the zones where the main operations took place, that is, in the North and East of France, our livestock has either been almost entirely

destroyed or considerably diminished."

The Minister then expatiated on the grave transport difficulties which were rendering the problem of feeding the towns almost hopeless, since, owing to the blockade, France could not secure any fuel from abroad. In this connection, he let fall the admission that "our peasant farms have already long been bereft of horses." According to the Minister, "in many cases the manufacture of butter and cheese has also been stopped" owing to difficulties of transportation.

Thus one year of war was enough to deal a crushing blow to the animal husbandry of France, the chief source of income of the French working peasant.

Tillage has been affected no less severely. In those parts where the war directly raged, there could be very little question of a harvest. But even in the other departments of France the harvest was handicapped by a drastic shortage of labor power and transport. In order to save something at least, all able-bodied persons were compulsorily mobilized for harvest work.

The harvesting of the whole crop in the occupied regions was under the supervision of the German military authorities, who set up a "field headquarters" in every department which recruited prisoners of war and even German troops for the work. In spite of these measures, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of August 22, 1940, was obliged to admit in a report on the harvest prospects in France that "there is often a lack of implements and of trac-

tion power. There is also a shortage of dairies."

In the unoccupied zone the Pétain government followed the pattern set by the German military authorities in the North and East of France and endeavored to cope with the situation by extensive compulsory labor; but the results were meager.

The rural proletarians or the urban unemployed compulsorily mobilized for agricultural labor were not allowed their own organization; there were no collective wages and hours agreements, no Sunday rest day; no adequate arrangements were made for decent housing or food, nor was there any provision against accidents. The inferno of war spread to the interior.

France is poor in forests. But the shortage of fuel resulting from the war is leading to a ruthless destruction of private and state forests. The correspondent of the *Gazette de Lausanne* reported on August 16 and 17 that owing to the shortage of gasoline and petroleum, extensive use was to be made for traffic purposes of gas generator motors. In the autumn of 1940, some 50,000 workers were already engaged in the French forests building 40,000 charcoal ovens. One million tons of charcoal were to be produced as a substitute for 700,000 tons of gasoline. This reckless destruction of the French forests is bound to result, in the course of time, in a further reduction in the fertility of arable land, and thus to a decline in harvests.

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The devastation wrought by the



war of the Japanese imperialists to the agriculture of China, and thus to the life of the Chinese rural population, is stupendous. The Japanese invasion has not only compelled the Chinese people year after year to send their finest sons and daughters to resist the imperialist conquerors, to devote all their labor power, all their means of production, stocks and natural resources to the interests of national defense; it has not only reduced enormous stretches of a once fertile land to desert, destroyed thousands of villages and driven millions of peasants from their homes; it has also dislocated the essential material foundation of Chinese agriculture, above all, the ancient and highly-ramified system of canals and dykes in China's great river valleys.

As a result of the war, the country has been afflicted by unparalleled disasters of drought and flood, which have robbed tens and hundreds of thousands of Chinese peasants of home, property and life, and ruined hundreds of thousands of acres of valuable and highly cultivated land for many years to come. The causal connection between the predatory Japanese war and the grave natural calamities of the summer of 1939 and the famine winter of that year is described by the American periodical *Far Eastern Survey* of March 13, 1940, on the basis of direct reports from the localities. It stated that in 1939, war, drought, blight and flood had reduced a large proportion of the population to living on bark and earth. The usual hardships of winter in North China were aggravated by

a shortage of dwellings and of fuel, with the result that thousands perished from cold. In view of the hopeless inadequacy of the existing food stocks and of the expected harvest in June, 1940, the population of North China were threatened with a famine without parallel in the history of the twentieth century.

Even the drought and floods of 1939 could partly be attributed to the upheavals, caused by the war, in the old social relations and to the change of authorities, for in wide sections of North China the water regulation system and the dykes used to be maintained by the co-operative efforts of the village authorities, which was now rendered impossible under existing war conditions. The prolonged effects and consequences of these calamities can partly be attributed to the physical exhaustion and the numerical reduction of the working population.

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What is the effect of the war on the agriculture of those countries which, although they are direct parties to the war, are not theaters of hostilities. These chiefly include all the small countries occupied by Germany in 1940.

Long before Belgium was directly affected by the war, her imports of fodder were already diminished by about 50 per cent owing to the British blockade, and the Belgian peasants were already obliged considerably to reduce the number of their pigs and cows. Today Belgium is practically cut off from all imports both of fodder and fertilizers. What this must mean to Belgium's highly

intensive agriculture may be judged from the following figures: Belgium's net imports of corn and barley alone amounted in 1937 to over 130,000 tons, raw phosphates to 309,000 tons, and of potassium salts to 130,100 tons.

Holland is in a similar state. Her highly developed agriculture was also largely dependent on imports of foreign fodders and fertilizers. In the first six months following the outbreak of the war, her imports of cereal fodders had already fallen by 38 per cent, and of phosphates by 40 per cent.

No better is the plight of Danish agriculture. In Denmark the income from animal husbandry amounted, on an average, to 90 per cent of the peasants' total income. This necessitated importing fertilizers and fodders to a value of 200,000,000 krone annually. The war has put a stop to these imports. According to a broadcast reported in the Canadian farming journal, *The Western Producer*, of July 4, 1940, Denmark's pig-breeding industry has today been "effectively destroyed." At least one-third of the milch cows have had to be slaughtered.

According to the Danish newspaper, *Berlingske Tidende*, on the orders of the government wholesale compulsory slaughtering began in the middle of September. While the number of milch cows is to be reduced at present by only 200,000, or by one-eighth, the number of calves must be reduced by one-third. Poultry is to be reduced by over 50 per cent. Naturally, such drastic measures can only spell the complete ruin of the small and middle peas-

ants and the consequent increased predominance of large-scale capitalist methods in agriculture.

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In Germany, the preparations for the war had already reduced hundreds of thousands of the peasant farms to a grave plight. It was, above all, the compulsory deliveries, first introduced for milk, eggs and cereals, and later extended to fodders, potatoes, vegetables and cattle, together with the ban on "self-marketing," that robbed the working peasants of a considerable portion of their earning capacity. This, together with the rapidly increasing burden of taxation, led to a state of crisis in German agriculture by the end of 1938. Owing to the demands of the "battle for production," on the one hand, and of the stringent credit restrictions imposed by the banks on the other, the majority of the peasant farms were soon reduced to a hopeless situation. With the development of the "four-year plan" of the armament industry, a general shortage of labor power resulted in the countryside, especially on the peasant farms (the shortage of agricultural laborers was estimated at the end of 1938 at one million). Even the state agrarian authorities (the *Reichsnährstand*) had publicly to admit the crisis.

The supply of fertilizers to the German peasants—one of the cardinal requisites of extensive farming—has been seriously affected by the war. The official *Halbsjahrberichte zur Wirtschaftslage* (1939-40, Vol. II) reported that the supply of nitrogen fertilizers had been reduced

to 85 per cent, and of phosphorus fertilizers to even 25 per cent of normal.

Regarding the replacement of labor power which the war and the munition industries had withdrawn from German agriculture, Germany has temporarily been able, to some extent, to ameliorate the "labor shortage" on the large estates and the big peasant farms by setting to work hundreds of thousands of war prisoners or agricultural laborers recruited in Poland; but this was of no help to the small and middle peasants. Of little help to the latter, too, are such measures as the recruitment of "land service girls" or the employment of adolescents in the "land service squads."

Nor have these peasants much to gain from the Government's "tractorization" campaign, as they have neither enough land to render the use of a tractor expedient, nor enough capital with which to purchase a tractor. The figure of the number of tractors manufactured in Germany, published by the Government before the outbreak of the war—60,000 per annum—means nothing now, for the war has considerably aggravated the shortage of raw materials for all industries not directly engaged in war production.

And so today, the small and middle German peasant farm is suffering from a lack of labor power, implements, fertilizers and capital. Increased taxation and war imposts, poor nourishment, inadequate clothing and other consequences of the war are necessarily accelerating the process of deterioration and decline of peasant farming which had al-

ready progressed very far even before the war.

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Even in those countries which have so far not been plunged into the maelstrom of war—America, South Africa and Australia—the peasant masses are suffering from the economic and political effects of a war situation that is growing more and more acute every day. In contrast to the first imperialist World War, when the neutral countries enjoyed favorable market conditions, today they have so far experienced little or no improvement in the sale of their agricultural produce. There are many reasons for this.

First of all, the agriculture of all these countries is still suffering from the effects of the severe economic depression of the years immediately prior to the war. For example, at the beginning of 1940, Canada had exportable stocks of wheat amounting to about 300,000,000 bushels, whereas normally Great Britain's total import requirements of wheat are only 200,000,000 bushels a year. Since the Scandinavian countries, followed, in May 1940, by Holland, Belgium and France, have dropped out as purchasers of transatlantic wheat, the Canadian farmer has not the slightest prospect of larger sales or better prices. To this must be added the drastic rise in taxation. The budget for 1939-40 provides for an increase in revenue of \$225,000,000. The condition of the Canadian wheat farmer may be judged from the fact that in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario new debt laws had to be passed in order to



save the farmers from wholesale bankruptcy, which would be doubly undesirable at the present time.

In Australia, too, 130,000,000 bushels of wheat are unsold, and the Government is drafting measures to restrict the crop area.

In the U.S.A., the exportable stocks of wheat amounted in the spring of 1940 to about 200,000,000 bushels, and of cotton to 2,400,000 tons. There is no prospect of selling these huge stocks to hungry and impoverished Europe.

The position of the farmers of these countries is aggravated by the fact that Great Britain, which at present is virtually the monopoly purchaser of their produce, is reducing her orders and forcing down prices to the minimum, from considerations both of foreign exchange and of shipping. For instance, the British Government last autumn bought up Australia's entire wool crop, but at a price that was considerably below the level of 1914, and meant only a loss to the small sheepbreeders. The British Government, has restricted its orders of butter, cheese, bacon, eggs and fruit.

In the U.S.A., Canada and Australia where in the past few years thousands of farmers had gone in for the intensive growing of apples, pears and similar fruits, the position of these farmers is today catastrophic. In the period from September, 1939, to April, 1940, America's exports of wheat dropped 50 per cent, tobacco 40 per cent and apples and pears 75 per cent. Prices for milk, eggs, and especially hogs in July, 1940, were considerably

lower than those of 1914, and even lower than the crisis prices of 1938. The U.S. Department of Agriculture—as well as the Canadian Government—found it necessary to warn the farmers against any illusions regarding an impending boom for agricultural produce during the present war. The position today, wrote *The Agricultural Situation*, the official organ of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in July, 1940, differs fundamentally from that which resulted in the sharp rise of prices in the first World War. Simultaneously, the "price scissors" have opened widely to the disadvantage of the farmers. On June 15, 1940, the official price index for farm produce was 95 (1910-14 = 100), and for agricultural implements 123.

*The Communist Review*, the organ of the Communist Party of Australia, was quite right when it said in February, 1940, in an article entitled "The War and the Farmer," that it was not the working farmers of Australia who were the war profiteers in the present situation, but a small group of export firms and large sheepbreeding corporations, which, in most cases, were closely interlocked. They were taking advantage of the present situation in order, with the help of the state monopolistic market regulations, to impose a water-tight control on the entire wool business,

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Just as in Australia under the National Security Act, and on the pretext of protecting national interests, a wool committee was set up,

the seats on which were divided by the big export firms and sheep-breeding corporations in order to dictate to the masses of the farmers their own delivery terms, quality specifications and prices, and simultaneously to oust the small firms from the market, so in all the other capitalist countries, the big private monopolies unite with the governmental bureaucracy to gain control over and plunder, or completely to oust, the working farmers and the small dealers.

This imperialist war has not only severely shaken the natural and economic basis of agriculture and the living standards of the working peasants; it is not only, as during the first imperialist World War, increasing the economic dependence of the small growers on the capitalist market and on the finance-capital monopolies that control the latter. The subjection of agriculture, and of peasant farming in particular—in its present perfected form—to a strict and comprehensive state control in the interests of the finance-capital monopolies and the big agrarian is indeed one of the specific new features introduced by the second imperialist war.

One of the outstanding effects of the first World War in the sphere of agriculture was to accelerate the commercialization of peasant farming, and this in the midst of a contraction of the world market, which was being shattered by severe crises, of disturbed currencies and of intensified exploitation of the small growers by the big finance-capital monopolies.

During and after the first World

War, whole countries appeared in the world market as new agrarian large-scale exporters; other agrarian countries were compelled, by their heavy national debts, to increase their exports. On the other hand, in the hitherto leading importing countries, a policy of agricultural "self-sufficiency" began to gain the upper hand. This contradiction between the growing marketable output of vast masses of peasants, on the one hand, and the relative, and in part absolute, diminution of absorption capacity of the capitalist world market, coupled with the "colossal super-profits" of the monopolies, resulted in a chronic agrarian crisis.

Whereas, in the first imperialist war, "war economy" was essentially restricted to the action of the state in taking over the produce "freely" grown by the peasants in fixing maximum prices, and in combating illicit trade, and while this kind of "state economy" was almost exclusively confined to a few food importing countries like Germany and Great Britain, today we find that the entire process of peasant farming is directly controlled by government orders and regulations. And we find this not only in the countries which are already at war and more or less effectively cut off from the world market, but even in those which are producing agricultural surpluses, such as the U.S.A.

In Germany, these state monopolistic and state capitalistic measures pertaining to agriculture had already been systematically and consistently developed in the period of preparation antecedent to this

war. They consisted not only in "market regulation," with its delivery quotas, quality specifications and "fixed prices," but also in the state control of the granting and use of credits, in state regulations as to cultivation, in the close supervision over every peasant farm by officially-appointed "advisers," in the limitation, and, in part, abolition, of the right of the land worker to change his place of employment, etc.

The passage from the stage of war preparations to actual large-scale hostilities was accompanied by a marked extension of these measures. The law of September 5, 1939, against enemies of the people envisaged the death penalty in cases of serious disobedience of official instructions. Under the law of August 27, 1939, the entire crop of the peasants, including legumes, hay, straw and seed, was requisitioned and placed at the disposal of the state. Like the urban population, the peasants have been put upon a food ration; even the amount of fodder for his cattle is prescribed. Animals may be slaughtered for household consumption only with official sanction, and that on condition that a certain part of the carcass, the fat in particular, be delivered to the state. Slaughter cattle fit for market can be sold only with the permission of specially appointed government officials. The making of butter, even for household use, is forbidden; the return of butter to the peasants by the dairies has been reduced to 70 per cent of what they had previously received. The supply of fertilizers

has been rationed. (*Halbsjahrberichte zur Wirtschaftslage*, 1939-40, Book II, p. 145.)

But that is not all: the interference of the state in peasant farming is even more far-reaching. Its aim is to alter the entire economic and social structure of agriculture—to hasten the elimination of the "inefficient" dwarf and small peasant farms in favor of a small number of "efficient" big peasant farms. Immediately after the victory over Poland, a plan was adopted for the resettlement of several hundred thousand small peasant families in the new Eastern Provinces. All the agricultural activities of the new settlers have been placed under special state supervision and control.

This state control over peasant farming, coupled with general "market regulation" by the state, and the setting up of state monopolistic machinery to handle all agricultural imports and exports and to create food reserves at home, are, however, not peculiar to German or Italian capitalism alone.

The British imperialists endeavored in a few months to catch up with the state measures of control and compulsion in the sphere of agriculture which their adversary had been carefully building up in the course of years. It is true that the Government had as early as 1932 introduced a system of marketing boards and import and sales quotas, together with subsidies to encourage cereal farming, the plowing up of meadows, etc.; but until 1939 all these measures bore the stamps rather of "crisis measures" than of measures specifically de-



signed to establish an autarchy in case of war. Their purpose was to offer an inducement to the capitalist farmers to develop branches of farming of importance in war time. But things changed considerably with the outbreak of the war. The "democratically" constituted marketing boards were replaced by Government institutions entrusted with carrying out the food policy, while "inducement" was supplemented by compulsory legislation.

The rapid development of the war in the spring of 1940 and the direct threat of foreign invasion confronting the British Isles led to even more drastic measures. A law passed on May 22, 1940, endowed the British Government with unlimited powers over all able-bodied persons, movable property, real estate, economic enterprises, etc., for the duration of the war. One of the immediate results of this law in agriculture was the introduction of heavy fines for farmers who disregarded the farming regulations.

For the land worker, as for the factory worker, this law meant the loss of trade union rights as regards wage demands, regulation of hours and the right to change employment. These new measures only served to strengthen the already considerable influence of the big import firms, manufacturing industries and the banks on the marketing boards.

The agents of the bourgeoisie are trying to persuade the peasants that these are only temporary measures necessitated by the interests of national defense. But it should not be forgotten that as early as 1934 about 56.3 per cent of the world's agricul-

tural imports and 57.2 per cent of the agricultural exports were governed by state import, export and home market regulations, and that this state market regulation, the "regulation of supply and demand," was already accompanied by "regulation of production" (e.g., crop restrictions in the agricultural exporting countries). These "crisis measures" were not withdrawn even in 1937, when a new wave of prosperity seemed to be in prospect. They were retained ostensibly as a means of influencing the market by the state, but actually as an economic weapon of the financial oligarchy, wielded by the state apparatus under its control, in order to support its fight for monopolistic sway over the agrarian and raw material countries, which, in their turn, were now themselves forced to resort to similar methods. The close connection between all these measures and the increased preparations for war was only too apparent. And these measures for the greater economic enslavement of the peasants and workers will not disappear of their own accord.

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In the U.S.A., even though that country is not directly engaged in the war, and beginning long before the new armament program was adopted, measures have been introduced which are converting an increasing number of the farmers into controlled statute laborers of big capital, or of the finance-capitalist state. This was admitted at the fifth international conference of agricultural scientists in August, 1937, by the representative of the

Farm Foundation in Chicago. He declared that even before then the majority of the working farmers had not been free to farm as they thought fit. And this not only in the South, where the sharecropper is nothing but a wage slave tied to the soil of the big landowners, and on the big corporation farms, where the tenant farmer is virtually nothing more than the manager of a farm belonging to the big commercial and insurance houses. But this is also true for the hundreds of thousands of farms which were formed after the great crisis with the help of Government credits and public support granted to farmers with small capital under various enactments, these farmers having in return to submit to state control for a period of forty years.

It is estimated that there are today about one million farm households which have received credit and support from the state under the Farm Security Act and are in return liable to permanent state economic control. In order to receive help from the Government, the farmers have to agree to an official "farm and home plan" which prescribes what crops they should grow, how much for their own consumption and how much for the market.

It is obvious that here we have the same tendencies as those which the imperialist war has already imposed in more general and rigorous forms in Europe.

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In Japan, too, the imperialist financial oligarchs are taking meas-

ures to bring the agriculture of their country, which consists mainly of millions of small and middle peasant farms, under their direct sway. This is being done not only from motives of war economy, but also to maintain their class rule in general.

Although, unlike China, Japan is not directly subject to the devastations of war, the war has considerably worsened the already oppressed and impoverished condition of the Japanese peasants. The Japanese Government is therefore considering a plan for the "reconstruction of agriculture," the main points of which, to judge from reports in the newspapers (*Japan Chronicle*, August 8, 1940), are as follows: resettlement of at least two million small peasants on the Asiatic continent in the next twenty years; utilization of the land thus falling vacant in Japan for the purpose of "doubling the number of middle peasants," in other words, of big peasants; "abolishing the tenancy system" and "reducing indebtedness," and the introduction of "agricultural labor service" in order to "regulate labor power."

All these imperialist and finance-capitalist measures of interference in peasant farming, and, above all, in the personal freedom of enterprise of the small peasants and agricultural laborers mean the dictatorial power of the central authorities over the labor and property of the working masses. The war creates a favorable atmosphere for such measures which aim at the enslavement of both the working class and the peasantry.

Naturally, these new forms of agrarian slavery are being represented to the disillusioned and embittered peasants by the agents of the bourgeoisie as measures for the salvation of the peasantry, and are accompanied by fine-sounding talk about the inestimable value of the peasants as the "backbone of the state and the guarantee of its future." But this imperialist myth is so transparent, and the chains of the financial oligarchy binding the peasants hand and foot so heavy, that increasing numbers of the peasants are prepared, as Karl Marx foresaw in *The Communist Manifesto*, to desert their own standpoint to adopt that of the proletarian; to tie up their lot with that of the working class.

Thus new and favorable conditions are arising in the capitalist countries for an alliance between the workers and peasants. It was only in Russia, where the slavish conditions on the land were particularly oppressive, that the first

imperialist World War led to the "desertion of the peasantry from the bourgeoisie," (Stalin), but not in Western Europe, still less in America, and not at all in those countries which were only on the threshold of their struggle for national emancipation. But today the situation is fundamentally different. Nearly everywhere in Europe the bourgeoisie has already reduced the masses to a condition of extreme misery and semi-serfdom, in part to state slavery. America and Japan are heading in the same direction. In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, however, the peasants are stirring into movement against their imperialistic oppressors.

As the imperialist war with all its shocks and upheavals proceeds, large masses of the peasantry will swing over towards the proletariat, in order, in alliance with the working class, to seek for a way of escape from the inferno of imperialist war and to put an end to moribund capitalism.



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## SOVIET GEORGIA—A LIVING EXAMPLE OF THE LENIN-STALIN NATIONAL POLICY

THE STRUGGLES AND VICTORIES OF THE GEORGIAN PEOPLE

By G. N. DOIDJASHVILI

**T**HE collapse of the two great "prisons of nations," the tsarist Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, enabled a number of small nations in Central and Eastern Europe to exercise their right of self-determination and to achieve their independence. One of the first acts of the Bolshevik government in Russia was to grant the unrestricted right of national self-determination to all the peoples formerly oppressed by tsarism. In Central Europe, the nations freed from the rule of the Hapsburgs began to set up their own states and to take their destiny in their own hands. Everywhere, the masses of the people were in a ferment.

But both in Central and in Eastern Europe, in Finland and in the Baltic countries, the bourgeoisie, with the aid of the victorious imperialist powers, and with the active cooperation of the leaders of the Second International, succeeded in crushing the popular revolutionary movement. It was not in the interest of the bourgeoisie of those countries to have the existence of the

new states made secure by the revolutionary activities of the masses; they preferred to bring the new national states under the "protection" and "guarantee" of the victorious imperialist powers, and to tie the fate of their respective countries with that of the Versailles system. It is superfluous today to go into the details of the disastrous consequences of this treacherous policy. The people had to pay for this bitter lesson with blood and suffering.

Here we want to tell the story of a people who at that time was also being dragged into the net of the Versailles system; a people over whose neck the imperialists, with the aid of the counter-revolutionary Social-Democrats, had already thrown the noose, but who soon freed themselves from it, and preferred by their own efforts, and in unity with the socialist Soviet Union, to build up their own state. We refer to Georgia.

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The Georgian Socialist Soviet Re-

public is one of the three Transcaucasian Union Republics (the other two are Azerbaijan and Armenia). To the West it stretches to the Black Sea, and to the South to the Turkish frontier. The Georgian Soviet Republic includes the Abkhazian and Adjara Autonomous Soviet Republics, and the South Ossetian Autonomous Region. It has an area of 27,027 square miles and a population of 3,542,300. A humid, subtropical climate, fertile valleys, wild mountain streams representing untold sources of power, and rich in minerals (manganese, coal, non-ferrous metals, oil, marble and barite)—such is Georgia.

At the crossroads of two main trade routes, the road from the East (from India and Persia) to the West (to Greece), and from the North (across the Caucasus) to the South, Georgia in the course of over two thousand years was invaded by numerous enemies. But neither subjugation to Rome in 65 B. C., nor the atrocities of the Persian conquerors, who held the Georgian people in subjection for three hundred years (from the fourth to the seventh century); neither the rule of the Arabs (from the seventh to the ninth century), nor the subsequent invasion of the Turks and Persians; neither the brutal atrocities of the Russian conquerors (1801-1917), nor the reign of terror, and the execution of innumerable revolutionary workers and peasants by the Menshevik government—in conjunction with the British and French troops of occupation and with the moral support of the lead-

ers of the Second International (1918-21)—could break the determination of the Georgian people to achieve their freedom.

Russian tsarism, which pursued a policy of enslaving the small nationalities, was able to keep the Georgian people in subjugation for many years owing to the feudal division of the country. Georgia became one of the colonies of Russian tsarism. This was the worst period of oppression for this brave people. The scum of the Russian bureaucracy were appointed to the head of the administration. Russian became the official language in all administrative and judicial bodies. In an official report of an investigation instituted by the senate in 1831 it was cynically and frankly stated that "the chiefs of the local administrations in Transcaucasia are exemplary violators rather than custodians of the law."

But to all this gruesome subjection, and to all the attempts of the imperialists to convert them into colonial slaves, the freedom-loving Georgian people answered in the immortal words of their great poet, Shota Rust'veli: "Better a glorious death than a shameful life." This indomitable determination of the Georgian people to fight for freedom and independence was expressed in the numerous peasant revolts that broke out in the reign of the tsarist autocracy.

The years 1902 to 1904 witnessed continuous unrest, peasant revolts and workers' strikes. In 1907, General Vorontsov-Dashkov, the Viceroy of the Caucasus, wrote in great alarm to the tsar, Nicholas II:

"At the time of my arrival in the Region, the revolutionary movement, evidently connected with the movement throughout the Empire [i.e., the revolution of 1905-07—G.D.] had already assumed dimensions that were dangerous to the state. I immediately declared martial law in Tiflis. . . . At the same time, part of the Tiflis Gubernia, and the whole of the Kutais Gubernia, were swept by revolts of the rural population; these revolts were accompanied by the wrecking of landlords' mansions, the refusal of the peasants to pay taxes, their refusal to recognize their rural authorities, the forcible seizure of private land and the wholesale felling of trees in state and private woods. . . . In Tiflis, Baku and other towns in the Region, strikes of workers in all trades, including domestic servants, were a daily occurrence."

What was at the bottom of these numerous and widespread peasant revolts in Georgia? General Voronstov-Dashkov, who cannot be suspected of having had any sympathy for the Georgian people, provided the answer to this question. He wrote:

"In Transcaucasia, and particularly in Georgia, the serfs were emancipated on terms that were particularly advantageous for the landlords and disadvantageous for the peasants. . . . moreover, the peasants' obligations to the landlords became more onerous than they were under serfdom. . . . The state taxes are collected by fair means or foul. If any trees grow on the peasants' lots, those lots immediately come under the forest tax; if another part of the

lot is covered with water owing to a river changing its course, it comes under the fishing tax. . . . Things have reached such a state that walnut trees, planted and reared by the peasants themselves, on their own land, come under the tax.

"The peasants, whose land amounts to twice the area of that owned by the private landlords, pay twenty times as much as the latter in money taxes alone."

Three-fourths of the total area of land in Georgia belonged to the big landlords, the church and the state, and only one-fourth belonged to the peasants. In some gubernias, Tiflis and Kutais, for example, 90 per cent of the land belonged to the state. About half the total peasants in pre-revolutionary Georgia owned less than two and a half acres of land per family; only one in fifteen peasant households owned a plow, and only one in three or four owned a mattock, etc. This economic oppression was still further intensified by political and moral oppression. Out of the state budget for Georgia amounting to 4,670,000 rubles, the tsarist government allocated 57 per cent for the maintenance of the police force, and only 4 per cent for public education.

Exposing the policy pursued by the tsarist government in the border regions of the Russian Empire, Joseph Stalin wrote in 1920:

"Tsarism deliberately settled the best areas in the border regions with colonizers in order to force the natives into the worst areas and to intensify national enmity. Tsarism restricted, and at times simply suppressed, the native schools, theaters



and educational institutions in order to keep the masses in intellectual darkness. Tsarism frustrated the initiative of the best members of the native population. Lastly, tsarism suppressed all activity on the part of the masses of the border regions." (J. V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 82, International Publishers, New York.)

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Comrade Stalin played a decisive part in the Georgian people's struggle for freedom. Himself a son of the people, he began to take an active part in the revolutionary movement when he was only fifteen years of age. As early as 1896-97, he was the leader of the first Marxist circle to be formed in Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, and in 1898 he joined the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, where, still a young student, he was prominent in the Left-wing and consistently Marxist group, known as the "Mesameh-Dassy" (The Third Group).

When Lenin's newspaper *Iskra* appeared, Stalin at once took up Lenin's position and later became the great leader of the Bolshevik movement throughout the Caucasus. Just before and during the first Russian Revolution in 1905 he was the organizer of all the big struggles conducted by the Georgian workers and peasants. Despite the fierce national strife fomented in the Caucasus by the tsarist government, and by the "native" ruling classes, the movement that Stalin organized united Georgians, Armenians, Russians and Azerbaijanians in its ranks. That is why Lenin de-

scribed the organization in the Caucasus as a model of proletarian internationalism. For his revolutionary activities Stalin was repeatedly imprisoned and exiled by the myrmidons of tsarism.

When the World War broke out, the long struggle that Stalin had waged against nationalism and against the Social-Democratic reformists (the Mensheviks) bore fruit. True, after the collapse of Russian imperialism, the Georgian bourgeoisie succeeded in retaining power for a time through the medium of the Social-Democratic government backed by German, and later, by British bayonets. But it was faced by the Bolshevik Party, which, conscious of its aim, was closely connected with the masses of the people, and thoroughly imbued by Stalin with the spirit of Marxism and proletarian internationalism. It was this party that subsequently took its place at the head of the whole nation and gave expression to the true will of the people.

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This period of Georgian history, the period of the Social-Democratic government (1918-21), is worth keeping in mind, for the Social-Democrats were not only the vanguard of Russian Menshevism, but also a bulwark of the Second International.

The leaders of the Socialist and Labor International, Kautsky, Vandervelde, MacDonald and others, visited Georgia to establish personal contact with the Menshevik government. On their return to

Western Europe they published glowing accounts of this new land they had discovered, "the only land in which true socialist democracy reigned." The Second International held up Social-Democratic Georgia as an example of how socialism could be attained in a truly "democratic" way as opposed to the proletarian dictatorship, the method adopted by the Russian working class under the leadership of the Bolsheviks.

But what did the Georgian Social-Democratic leaders achieve in the country where they had an absolute majority in parliament and wielded unlimited power? What did they do to secure the national independence of the Georgian people? What did they do to improve the conditions of the workers in town and country? What steps did they take towards socialism?

Let the facts speak for themselves.

First of all, how did the "Independent Georgian Republic" come into being?

On May 14, 1918, the so-called "Georgian National Council," in which the influence of the Social-Democrats predominated, decided to appeal to General Lossow, the commander-in-chief of the German army of occupation, to secure for Georgia Germany's support in all international and internal political questions, to continue the advance of the German army to the North Caucasus, to leave the German prisoners of war and officers in Georgia and entrust them with the military organization, so that the Georgian Government might employ these

troops to maintain internal order. (Khachapuridze, *The Struggle for the Proletarian Revolution in Georgia*, p. 129, Zarya Vostoka Publishers, Tbilisi.)

Later, on May 28, in the presence of representatives of the German imperial authorities, the Social-Democratic Prime Minister Noah Jordania and the Metropolitan Leonid, the "independence" of Georgia was proclaimed. The army of occupation was so satisfied with the activities of the "independent" government that General von Kress recommended to the German Chancellor that on the occasion of the official recognition of the "Georgian Republic" by the imperial German government, certain Georgian "personalities" be decorated with high imperial orders and medals. Among a number of other Social-Democratic ministers and officials to receive these decorations were Prime Minister Jordania, Minister of Foreign Affairs Chenkeli, and Minister for the Interior Ramishvili.

After the collapse of Germany, a few weeks after these German decorations were received, the Georgian Mensheviks sought other protectors for their "independence." On December 3, 1918, Mr. Jordan, the representative of British imperialism was given an official reception with all due ceremony in Tiflis—in an almost empty square—for the people refused to witness the ceremony. The place of the German officers in the bed of the Menshevik prostitute was taken by British officers. Although the German army of occupation was replaced by the British army, the

Social-Democratic ministers continued to crow about the absolute independence of the country.

"We prefer the West to the Bolsheviks!" This was the chief motto of the Mensheviks. They set to work to carry out their "program" by dissolving the workers' organizations, flinging the leaders of the masses into prison and inciting the various nationalities in Transcaucasia against each other. For this purpose they advocated the restoration of Georgia within its ancient historical frontiers, and directed the spearhead of their activities against the national minorities. They robbed these nationalities not only of the right to autonomy, but even of the right to use their own languages in the schools, in the courts, and in dealings with government officials.

At an annual meeting of shareholders of a certain oil trust, Herbert Ellen, the English chairman of a Baku oil company, said:

"Never in the history of the British Isles has there been such a favorable opportunity for the peaceful penetration of British influence, and for the creation of a second India, or second Egypt, for British trade. . . . The Russian oil industry . . . will, in itself, be a valuable asset to the Empire."

Thus, the real object of the British and American imperialists was to convert Georgia, and Transcaucasia, into a second India or Egypt. In pursuit of this object the British imperialists ruthlessly strode over mountains of corpses. In September, 1918, they already occupied Baku, overthrew the Soviet government

that had been established by the workers, and set up a puppet, Social-Democratic government, the so-called "Trans-Caspian Dictatorship." The best leaders of the Georgian, Azerbaidjan and Armenian people, the twenty-six People's Commissars of Baku, were tried by court-martial, set up by the wretched "government," and shot. The famous names of the murdered popular heroes, Shaumyan and Djaparidze, will live forever in the memory of the working people of Transcaucasia.

Thus, with the aid of the Social-Democratic leaders, the Transcaucasian republics of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were transformed into British colonies, like India or Malay. The largest industrial establishments in Georgia, and the whole of Transcaucasia, passed into the hands of British, French and American concessionaires. They had no intention whatever of investing capital for the modernization and technical improvement of these undertakings; their object was to exploit them to the very utmost and then abandon them. The result was that many of the factories, oil wells, manganese works, and so forth, were quickly reduced to utter ruin.

At the Eighteenth Congress of the Georgian Social-Democratic Party, Ramishvili, one of the Social-Democratic leaders, "justified" the preservation of capitalist and feudal private property in Georgia on the following "grounds":

"The objective conditions for the realization of our program are lacking. We have been compelled to

serve the cause of bourgeois democracy. . . . A government which loses sight of the objective conditions serves the cause of reaction; that is why *our object has been moderate and restrained; we are no longer intensifying the revolution.*" (Khachapuridze, *Cited place*, p. 138.)

The Menshevik leaders thought that they were acting "wisely" in attempting to "leave everything as it was," so long as they could keep in the saddle with the aid of British bayonets. But everything did not remain "as it was." The real masters of the country, the bankers of the City in London, like Shylock, insisted on their bond. They supplied the bayonets to "maintain internal order," and demanded *all* the riches of the country, not only oil and manganese, but also corn and wine, vegetables and fruit. The Georgian landowners, whom the Social-Democratic government allowed a free hand, immediately began to sell for export all the agricultural produce of the country. In the ports of Batum and Poti, heart-rending scenes were witnessed. Foreign ships, protected by British troops and the Social-Democratic "Defense Corps," were being loaded with grain, cheese, tea, wine, fruit, vegetables, and so forth, while crowds of starving people saw the food going out of the country. Many dock laborers refused to load the ships on the ground that the masses in the country were starving; but their courageous resistance was broken by armed force.

The economy of the country went to rack and ruin. Coal output

dropped by no less than 85 per cent; it took *weeks* for freight trains to travel between Tiflis and Batum. Wages were reduced nearly every month, so that in the third year of the reign of the Social-Democratic government the average wages of the Georgian workers amounted to only 20 per cent of the pre-war level.

Disillusioned and embittered, the masses of the working people turned away from the Social-Democratic leaders and their masters, the British invaders. The hatred of the people for the foreign rulers was so strong that in the streets they gave the officers and soldiers of the army of occupation a wide berth to avoid touching these "hangmen," as they called them.

The influence of the Communist Party grew steadily. In this situation, the Menshevik government itself revealed what value it attached to the "democratic liberties," such as free press, right of assembly and right of association, which the propagandists of the Second International made so much of in their boasting of the "Georgian paradise." In July and August, 1920, wholesale arrests were made among the Communists; the Communist newspapers were suppressed; the editors were thrown into jail; their printing presses were closed; all meetings were prohibited, and the revolutionary organizations were suppressed.

A reign of terror swept the whole country. The Social-Democratic government sent out numerous *punitive expeditions* against rebellious villages, whole provinces and even



against whole nationalities. The following is an entry made in his diary by Valiko Djugeli, a Social-Democratic leader, and commander of one of these punitive expeditions sent against the Ossetians:

"Night has fallen. Everywhere fires are blazing. These are the burning houses of the rebels. All around us Ossetian villages are burning. . . . I gaze upon these smoking ruins, calm in spirit and with a clear conscience."

The Georgian Mensheviks in alliance with the Entente converted the land into a huge battlefield. The Georgian jingoism fostered by the Tiflis government resulted in sanguinary conflicts between Georgians and Azerbaijanians, and between Georgians and Armenians. Not satisfied with that, the Social-Democratic leaders tried to find a way out of the situation that was becoming more and more dangerous by helping in the attempt to overthrow the Soviet Government in Russia and to defeat the Red Army. The Georgian Menshevik government helped both Denikin (in 1919) and Wrangel (in 1920) in the war of intervention against Soviet Russia. This reactionary and adventurist policy threatened to throw the ruined and starving country into worse chaos than ever.

Meanwhile, the neighboring countries, Azerbaijan and Armenia, freed themselves from the capitalist yoke and established a Soviet government. Thus, for the British and French imperialists the oil wells of Baku ran dry; but they began to flow more freely for the workers

of the great Land of Soviets. As a result, the interest of the City in London in Georgian "democracy" waned. The Georgian people then determined to throw off the double yoke of foreign rule and of the Menshevik dictatorship. In February, 1921, the people rose under the leadership of Sergo Ordjonikidze. The Red Army gave the Georgian people a fraternal hand, and in the same month the tottering regime of the Social-Democratic leaders collapsed like a house of cards.

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The establishment of the Georgian Soviet Republic ushered in a new era in the history of the Georgian people. The heritage left to the workers by the Menshevik government was indeed a terrible one: industry and agriculture in a state of utter ruin; an impoverished people; a devastated culture, and national strife.

This national strife was the main obstacle to the socialist reconstruction of the Transcaucasian Republic. In a speech he delivered at a meeting of the Tiflis Party organization on June 6, 1921, Stalin said:

"Obviously the three years' existence of nationalist governments in Georgia (Mensheviks), in Azerbaijan (Mussavatists) and in Armenia (Dashnaks) did not pass without effect. By carrying out their national policies, by working among the toilers in a spirit of aggressive nationalism, these nationalist governments finally brought matters to the point where each of these small countries found itself surrounded by a hostile nationalist atmosphere which deprived Georgia and Armenia of Russian grain and Azer-

baijan oil, and Azerbaijan and Russia of goods going through Batum—not to speak of armed clashes (Georgian-Armenian war) and massacres (Armenian-Tatar), the natural result of the nationalist policy.” \*

It was no easy task to clear the atmosphere, to imbue the working people of all nationalities as speedily as possible with feelings of true, fraternal friendship for each other. The enormous importance that Lenin attached to this task can be seen from the letter he sent to the Communists in the Caucasus, dated April 14, 1921. In this letter Lenin wrote:

“ . . . I permit myself to express the hope that their close alliance [of the Soviet Republics of the Caucasus] will serve as a model of national peace, unprecedented under the bourgeoisie and impossible under the bourgeois system.”\*\*

Thanks to the Lenin-Stalin national policy, which they faithfully pursued, the Communists of Georgia and of the other Caucasian republics fully justified Lenin's hope. Today, under the Soviet regime there is no strife over territory among the peoples of Transcaucasia, nor can there be any such strife. And this is due not only to the fact that the Soviet Government has found a correct solution for the problem, but also to the fact that all the nationalities enjoy the same conditions of life. The conditions enjoyed by Armenians living in

Georgia, or in Azerbaijan, say, are equally as good as those they would enjoy in their own Republic. Under the Soviet regime, Armenians in Georgia, or Georgians in Armenia, have opportunities of receiving their education in their native languages. They have their own national theaters. They can conduct any business they need in government offices in their own languages. They have the right to vote and be elected to all legislative, administrative, public and political organizations. They have their own newspapers, pamphlets and books printed in their own language. They can freely follow their religious customs, etc., etc.

Among the peoples of the Caucasus, as indeed among the peoples throughout the U.S.S.R., there can be no strife over land, for the peasants of any nationality, irrespective of where they live, in their own national republic or in some other, everywhere enjoy the same right to land. There is no strife over the factories, mines, etc., nor can there be, for all are public property. The oil that is obtained in Baku, the tractors that are built in Kharkov, or the shoes made in Moscow, belong equally to the working people of Georgia, Armenia, Turkmenia, the Ukraine, etc. Hence, in the Soviet Union the causes of strife between nations have been completely eradicated. In the U.S.S.R., friendship among the nations rests on the firm and unshakeable foundation of socialism. And an example of this Lenin-Stalin friendship and fraternity among nations is provided by the Caucasus, where formerly na-

\*Quoted in L. Beria, *Stalin's Early Writings and Activities*, p. 172, International Publishers, New York.

\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 171-72.

tional hatred and strife prevailed, and where now all the nationalities are united by bonds of fraternity, mutual aid, mutual achievement and mutual joy.

"And friendship among the peoples of the U.S.S.R. is a great and important achievement. For as long as this friendship exists, the peoples of our country will be free and invincible." (J. V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question.*)

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During the twenty years or so that have elapsed since the day freedom came to Georgia and released the people from the yoke of political, social and national slavery forever, the whole country has undergone a marvelous change.

It was certainly no smooth, paved road that the Georgian people have traveled during these twenty years. The success that they can proudly look back on now was achieved in the course of a continuous series of stern struggles. The deposed capitalists, the imperialists who had been driven from the country, the remnants of the shattered Georgian Menshevik party, and the representatives of the various chauvinist groups, in various guises and by various methods, made repeated attempts to hinder the work of socialist construction. Nevertheless, the consistent application of the Lenin-Stalin national policy by the Communist Party of Georgia thwarted all these attempts.

Twenty years! A very short space of time when regarded in the light of history. But for the Georgian

people so much has changed during these years that the memories of what had existed before seems to go back into the dim and distant past. Not only has a new generation sprung up; far more significant is that a new world has been created. The working people of Georgia, like those of the whole of Transcaucasia, have caught up with giant strides that which they were prevented from achieving by the imperialist conquerors and colonial rulers. The formerly despised Georgians, who were not only denied the right to govern their country, but whose ability to do so was denied, have by their own efforts transformed Georgia into "one of the happiest corners of the world," as V. M. Molotov put it in a speech he delivered on the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the Georgian Soviet Republic.

What is the happiness of the Georgian people based on?

The people are happy because they need no longer serve foreign rulers; because they themselves control the factories, mines and oil wells; because the Soviet regime gave the peasants of Georgia for their use for all time 1,823,598 acres of land that formerly belonged to the princes and big landowners; because the whole country is covered with a close network of schools of every kind, from village schools to the highest universities in the cities. The Georgian people are happy because political and economic freedom has opened for them all the sources of culture. The people for whom had been mapped out the fate of downtrodden

colonial slaves are now the masters of their country working as engineers and technicians, agronomists, tractor drivers, doctors, scientists, teachers and authors; and they have raised their industry and agriculture, which formerly had been at a low stage of development, to an astonishingly high level. Georgia has become the main center in the U.S.S.R. for the cultivation of sub-tropical produce.

On the Black Sea Coast is situated that wonderful land Kolchida. This is Colchis of the days of antiquity famed for its riches; the ancient Greek legends mention the voyages of the Argonauts to Colchis in quest of the Golden Fleece. The tsarist government was incapable of developing the immense resources of this sub-tropical country. Before the Soviet Government was established, a large part of this territory, about 543,620 acres, was submerged and represented a huge malaria-infested bog. The population either emigrated or died out.

Only under the Soviet regime were the immense possibilities of Kolchida realized and measures taken to develop them. A huge reclamation scheme was undertaken. By 1939 the total length of drainage canals had reached 459 miles; and to protect the country from further inundation, dams have been erected of a total length of 72 miles. In the last ten years alone the area under sub-tropical crops has been increased by 160,615 acres. The main sub-tropical crop in Kolchida is tea.

In Georgia, the tea crop covers

an area of over 136,000 acres, from which the Government in 1939 obtained a total of 44,000 tons of green tea, and in 1940, 51,166 tons. Before the Soviet regime, no tea was grown in Georgia; in 1932 the first crop of the state tea plantations amounted to 117 tons. There has also been a rapid increase in the cultivation of citrus fruits. In 1939 the state obtained 445,000,000 tangerines, oranges and lemons, as against 12,700,000 in 1932. These figures are a vivid illustration of the enormous successes achieved by Soviet Georgia in this field.

Vine growing has increased tenfold. In 1939 the vineyard area amounted to about 120,000 acres, and it is planned to increase this area to 198,000 acres by the end of 1944. About 150,000 members of collective farms in Georgia are engaged in the cultivation of silk worms as a subsidiary occupation. The quantity of cocoons obtained from oak-leaf silk worms from 1937 to 1939 increased tenfold.

An important place in the agriculture of Georgia is held by tobacco. Here the best brands of yellow tobacco such as "Samsun," "Trapezund," etc., are grown.

The collective farm orchards deliver hundreds of thousands of tons of luscious fruit; from 1930 to 1939 the fruit area increased from 89,000 acres to 164,000 acres.

Nearly all the collective farms in Georgia combine different branches of agriculture. For example, this year the "Beria" collective farm in the village of Asureti, Agubal Region, sent to the All-Russian Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow



exhibits of vegetables, potatoes, corn, grapes and other fruit, as well as the produce of its dairy farms and piggeries, etc. This form of combined farming has resulted in a considerable increase in collective farm incomes. Poverty among the peasantry is a thing of the dim and distant past, never to return. During the last seven years the income per working day of the Georgian collective farmer in money alone has increased sixfold; and yearly incomes ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 rubles are by no means a rarity.

In 1936 there were nine collective farms in Georgia which had an income of 1,000,000 rubles; in 1939 there were 37 collective farms with such incomes. In 1939 there were in Georgia 54 machine and tractor stations, having a total of 2,334 tractors, 438 harvester-combines and 184 motor trucks.

The industries of Georgia have fully kept pace with the growth of agriculture under the Soviet regime. The country now has a machine-building industry which supplies machines for the principal branches of industry in Transcaucasia. In Tbilisi, the capital of the Republic, there are now factories producing machine tools, oil well equipment, and textile, silk spinning and vine cultivation machinery. In Batum there are factories which manufacture the machinery needed for the tea factories. In Chiatura, the manganese mines are fully mechanized. Batum is famous for its up-to-date oil refineries.

In many cities in Georgia, such as Tbilisi, Kutais and others, there are

numerous silk and other textile mills. Large factories for consumers' goods, shoes, knitted goods and confectionery, and dozens of large sawmills have been erected and are now functioning. The oil industry, too, is making rapid strides in Georgia. At one time it was thought that there was no oil in Georgia; but prospecting operations undertaken by the Government revealed the presence of oil in twenty-one districts, and successful boring operations have been conducted at seven hundred different points. It is now estimated that Georgia has oil resources amounting to over half a billion tons at least. To get an idea of the immensity of these resources, we must remember that from the earliest time that oil was obtained in Baku to the present day, that is, over one hundred years, about 400,000,000 tons of oil have been obtained.

Hand in hand with the development of industry and agriculture there has been a rise in the general standard of culture in the country. Tbilisi, the heart of Georgia, with its 520,000 inhabitants, has become one of the greatest cultural centers in the Soviet Union. Numerous lofty and comfortable apartment houses, theaters and Palaces of Culture, and wide streets and embankments have been erected. The River Kura, which formerly served as the sewage canal of the city, is now lined with concrete and granite, and its fine, broad embankments are planted with trees and flowers. The city is famed for its industry, its colleges and its scientific institutes.

Georgia is rapidly becoming a republic with 100 per cent literacy. All children attend school, and schools are available for Georgian, Russian, Abkhasian, Ossetian, Armenian, Greek and other children. Before the revolution there was only one college in Georgia; today there are 19, covering different branches of learning. Since the Soviet regime was established, forty-five theaters have been built, among which are the magnificent Rust'aveli Dramatic Theatre, and the Georgian Opera and Ballet. Georgia, once a backward country, now occupies first place among the republics of the Soviet Union as regards the educational level of her population. Out of every thousand inhabitants of Georgia no less than 113 have had a high school education, and eleven out of every thousand have had a college education.

In a speech delivered at a meeting of the Central Executive Committee

of Georgia, held in 1936 to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the Georgian Soviet Republic, Comrade Voroshilov said:

"The tsarist lickspittles and literary hacks were fond of calling Georgia a jewel in the crown of the Russian Empire. But these gentlemen were very careful not to say that this jewel was drenched with the blood and tears of the working people of Georgia. Only today is Georgia becoming a real jewel, a treasure, not only for her own people but for the whole of the Soviet Union."

Situated on the borders of the capitalist world, Georgia shines like a brilliant Southern star in the constellation of the sixteen Union Republics; a living testimony of the inherent strength of the Soviet system; the herald of peace and friendship among nations; the symbol of the power and invincibility of the great Soviet Union.

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## HOW THE BOLSHEVIKS WON THE MASSES IN 1917

BY A. VLADIMIROV

"The point here is not that the vanguard shall realize the impossibility of preserving the old order of things and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses, the millions, shall understand this inevitability and display their readiness to support the vanguard. But the masses can understand this only from their own experience. The task is to enable the vast masses to realize from their own experience the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime, to promote such methods of struggle and forms of organization as will make it easier for the masses to learn from experience to recognize the correctness of the revolutionary slogans."—Joseph Stalin.

**T**HE effects of the first world imperialist war were particularly devastating in the case of Russia.

After thirty months of war, in which over sixteen million men were mobilized, or about 47 per cent of the total adult able-bodied male population, Russia was in a state of complete economic ruin.

The whole burden of the war fell upon the shoulders of the workers and peasants. Hundreds of thousands perished in the trenches. Millions of working people in the

rear suffered unparalleled hardships and privation. Yet at the same time the manufacturers, big merchants and landlords were piling up wealth, stuffing their pockets with scandalous war profits. Profiteering and bribery reigned supreme. The price of bread rose rapidly. Food became scarce in the country, and the soldiers in the trenches and the workers in the rear were reduced to starvation rations.

At the beginning of 1917, the economic disruption became even more acute. The capital cities—Petrograd and Moscow—ran short of food. Consignments of provisions practically stopped owing to the total collapse of the transport system. The factories came to a standstill. The position of the workers became intolerable.

On February 27, 1917, the workers of Petrograd rose in revolt. "Down with the tsar!" "Down with the war!" "We want bread!"—the working men and women demanded. They were led by the Bolsheviks. The insurgent workers were joined by the soldiers.

The combined armed action of the workers and soldiers decided the fate of the autocracy.

News of the victory of the revolution in Petrograd swept like wildfire through the country. Everywhere—at the front and in the rear—workers, peasants and soldiers hastened to join the Petrograd workers and rallied beneath the banner of revolution. The tsarist autocracy was swept away.

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The revolution awakened the hitherto oppressed and downtrodden masses, with all their petty-bourgeois prejudices, and like a spring flood swept them irresistibly into social and political life.

Right at the very beginning of the revolution the workers, peasants and soldiers set up Soviets. But owing to their inadequate organization and excessive trustfulness, they *voluntarily* surrendered the power to the bourgeoisie.

"While the Bolsheviks were directly leading the struggle of the masses in the streets, the compromising parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, were seizing the seats in the Soviets, and building up a majority there. This was partly facilitated by the fact that the majority of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party were in prison or exile (Lenin was in exile abroad and Stalin and Sverdlov in banishment in Siberia) while the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were freely promenading the streets of Petrograd." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 177, International Publishers, New York.)

These traitors to the revolution, playing on the confidence of the masses, did their utmost to slur over

the question of terminating the war, the question of peace, and to turn over the power to the bourgeoisie. With their assistance, there was formed, side by side with the Soviets, a Provisional Government, headed by avowed defenders of the bourgeois and landlord system and direct agents of British and French capital.

The revolution was made for the sake of peace, bread, land and liberty. But the Provisional Government was neither willing nor able to give any of these things.

The objective situation in Russia in 1917 was such that whoever wanted peace, bread, land and liberty, whoever wanted to put an end to the war and to the economic disruption and crisis, had to proceed immediately and unhesitatingly to fight for the power of the workers and poor peasants, for socialism. For peace could not be expected from a government of bourgeois and landlords who were interested in continuing the imperialist war. Bread could only be got by taking it from the landlords and capitalists, for which purpose they would have to be expropriated. The land could be given to the peasants only by taking it away from the landlords. Liberty for the people could only be assured by overthrowing the power of the capitalists and landlords, who were already negotiating with the representatives of the deposed monarchy for its restoration.

The economic disruption could not be repaired except by establishing the strictest state control over the production and consumption of goods, and except by encroaching



on the profits of the capitalists and landlords. The whole objective course of events in Russia in 1917, powerfully accelerated by the imperialist war, made a transition to socialism an issue of the utmost urgency, as the only salvation for the masses of the people. Not a single one of the basic problems of the revolution could be settled without definite steps being taken towards socialism, without fighting for socialism.

The Bolshevik Party was fully aware of this. Having led the workers in the February fighting, after the overthrow of tsardom it began to devote all its energies to consolidating its ranks. It swept aside the sceptics, the capitulators and the bourgeois agents who had wormed their way into its midst, and strove for the transfer of power to the Soviets.

The bourgeoisie was equally aware of it. It therefore at once began to organize and muster its forces to fight the revolution, and only waited for an opportune moment to concentrate the whole power in its own hands and suppress the Soviets.

The only ones who were not yet aware of this were the broad mass of the people, who had just been awakened to political life, were intoxicated with the comparative ease of the victory over tsardom, believed in the promises of the Provisional Government, and allowed themselves to be fooled by the compromising parties—the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

Lenin wrote:

“A gigantic petty-bourgeois wave

has swept over everything and overwhelmed the class-conscious proletariat, not only by force of numbers but also ideologically; that is, it has infected very wide circles of workers with the petty-bourgeois outlook on politics. (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 49, International Publishers, New York.)

But the masses were yearning for peace, want inexorably drove them to fight for bread and land, and this was the Achilles' heel of the compromising policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and of the counter-revolutionary policy of the bourgeoisie.

Any further advance of the revolution would solely depend on whether the masses would understand the true state of affairs, and shake off the influence of petty-bourgeois views on politics; it would depend on their attitude towards the bourgeoisie, towards the Provisional Government, and towards the frothing eloquence of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary orators.

The masses had to learn from their own experience that peace, bread, land and liberty could not be obtained without overthrowing the imperialist Provisional Government, without driving out the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and other agents of the bourgeoisie, and without replacing it by a government of Soviets.

The growth of the February bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution would therefore depend upon the speed with which the masses were enlightened, on whether they would rid themselves of the influence of the bourgeoisie

and the compromising Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.

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On April 3 (April 16, new style), 1917, after having spent ten years in exile abroad, Lenin returned to Russia. The following day, at a conference of Bolshevik delegates to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies held in a small room in the Taurida Palace in Petrograd, he read his theses on "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution." These were his immortal April Theses:

"The specific feature of the present situation in Russia," Lenin declared, "is that it represents a *transition* from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organization of the proletariat, led to the assumption of power by the bourgeoisie—to the *second stage*, which must place the power in the hands of the proletariat and the poor strata of the peasantry.

"This transition is characterized, on the one hand, by a maximum of freedom (Russia is *now* the freest of all the belligerent countries in the world); on the other, by the absence of violence in relation to the masses, and, finally, by the naive confidence of the masses in the government of capitalists, the worst enemies of peace and socialism.

"This specific situation demands on our part an ability to adapt ourselves to the *specific* requirements of Party work among unprecedentedly large masses of proletarians who have just awakened to political life." (*Ibid.*, p. 22.)

There could be no question of

supporting the Provisional Government. The war continued to be an imperialist war, a war against the interests of the people. It was necessary, Lenin taught, to expose the utter falsity of the promises of the Provisional Government, to explain to the masses that the Soviets of Workers' Deputies:

"... are the *only possible* form of revolutionary government and that therefore our task is, as long as *this* government submits to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.

"As long as we are in the minority we carry on the work of criticizing and explaining errors and at the same time advocate the necessity of transferring the entire power of state to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, so that the masses may by experience overcome their mistakes." (*Ibid.*, p. 23.)

An essential prerequisite for the transition to the socialist revolution was to isolate the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who at that time held the majority in the Soviets, and for the Bolshevik Party to win over the majority of the revolutionary masses. But how was this to be done? In view of the fact that the broad mass of the people were a prey to petty-bourgeois influences, this could only be done if the masses learned by their own experience that the Bolshevik slogans were correct.

It was not enough to tell the masses the truth; it had to be brought home to them.

The slogan advanced by Lenin—"All Power to the Soviets!" was a slogan of this kind. What did it mean?

It meant the transfer of the whole power of the state to the Soviets.

"The Soviets in their class composition were organs of the movement of the workers and peasants, the ready-made form of their dictatorship. Had they possessed the entire state power, the main shortcoming of the petty bourgeois strata, their chief sin, namely, confidence in the capitalists, would have been overcome in practice, would have been subjected to the criticism derived from the experience of their own measures." (*Ibid.*, p. 168.)

The economic demands made in Lenin's theses amounted to the confiscation of the landed estates and the nationalization of all the land, the establishment of a national bank by the fusion of all the banks in the country, and the institution of control over the social production and distribution of goods. These measures were not directly socialistic in themselves, but they were important steps towards socialism. The strength of the Bolshevik economic platform lay in the fact that it contained just those demands which were alone capable of satisfying the masses and saving them from starvation and of leading the country out of the state of war and economic disruption.

Lenin's April Theses were a powerful weapon to the Party in its efforts to win the support of the masses for the socialist revolution.

They enabled the Party "to emerge onto the new road at one

stride." (Stalin.) There were only isolated individuals within the Party, such as Kamenev, Pyatakov, Rykov and other traitors, who opposed the April Theses and tried to drag the Party back. The Party repudiated these individuals and rallied solidly around Lenin.

And this was no chance thing: the Party had been prepared by its whole previous experience for a new stage in the struggle for socialism. And, immediately after the February Revolution, it was prepared for this, above all, by Stalin's articles in the *Pravda*.

Stalin returned to Petrograd from exile in remote Turukhansk on March 12 (25), 1917. Two days later an article of his appeared in *Pravda* entitled "The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies," in which he wrote:

"To shatter the old power a temporary alliance between the insurrectionary workers and soldiers was enough. . . .

"But a temporary alliance between the workers and soldiers is far from enough to preserve the liberties achieved and to further develop the revolution.

"That requires that this alliance should be made conscious and secure, lasting and stable, sufficiently stable to withstand the provocative attempts of the counter-revolutionaries. . . .

"The organs of this alliance are the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. . . .

"The revolutionary Social-Democrats must work to consolidate these Soviets, make them universal, and link them together under the aegis of the Central Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies as the organ

of revolutionary power of the people." (Lenin-Stalin, 1917, pp. 11-12.)

Stalin wrote that the war had not ceased to be an imperialist war. He denounced those who were demanding that the Provisional Government should be supported.

"The Provisional Government," he wrote in an article entitled "Conditions of Victory of the Russian Revolution," "did not arise on the barricades, but in the vicinity of the barricades. Consequently, it is not revolutionary—it only trails after the revolution, dragging it back and getting in its way."

Thus, thanks to the way in which Stalin put the question, the Bolshevik Party was already fully prepared for the slogan, "All Power to the Soviets!"

That is why Lenin's April Theses, which opened a new historical phase in the Party's work, was very soon adopted unanimously by the whole Party.

At that period the Bolshevik Party stressed the need of *propaganda*, of *explaining its slogans*, as the prime prerequisite in its efforts to win over the masses. The circumstances of the situation made this form of Party activity the cardinal one. Lenin vigorously trounced those who were inclined to minimize or altogether deny the importance of propaganda.

"This *may appear* to be 'nothing more' than propaganda work," he wrote at this period, "but in reality it is extremely *practical revolutionary work*; for there is no advance for a revolution that has come to a standstill, that has choked itself with phrases, and that keeps mark-

ing time, *not because of external obstacles, not because of the violence of the bourgeoisie* (Guchkov is still only threatening to employ violence against the soldier masses), but *because of the naive trustfulness of the masses.*" (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol VI, p. 51.)

Exposing the Mensheviks and "Left" phrasemongers, Lenin above all demanded persistent, incessant, and painstaking day-to-day explanatory work among the masses. What was required was not high-sounding ultra-revolutionary talk about immediately overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie, but the systematic propaganda of the Bolshevik slogans; only such efforts could lead to the desired goal—the emancipation of the masses from the influence of the bourgeoisie.

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The Petrograd Bolshevik Conference, at which Lenin's theses were discussed and adopted, had scarcely ended when the first major crisis swept over the country, fully corroborating these theses. We are referring to the demonstration of April, 1917.

On the morning of April 19, the day following the First of May celebrations (under the old calendar May Day fell on April 18), in which for the first time countless masses took part, the news was circulated that Milyukov, the Foreign Minister in the Provisional Government, had sent a note to the Allies intimating Russia's readiness to continue the war until complete victory.

Huge demonstrations filled the streets of Petrograd. The workers



and soldiers marched towards the Mariinsky Palace, where the Provisional Government was in session. One regiment even came out fully armed with the intention of arresting the Provisional Government. The latter attempted to organize a counter-demonstration, but without success. The workers and soldiers of Petrograd rose in action.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party called upon the masses to organize a demonstration in Petrograd on April 21. At the same time it explained to them that their only salvation lay in joining the revolutionary proletariat, for only a government in the shape of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies would be in a position to put an early end to the war and secure a just peace.

Over one hundred thousand workers and soldiers responded to the call of the Bolsheviks and joined the demonstration against "Milyukov's note," under the slogans "Down with War!" "Publish the Secret Treaties!" and "All Power to the Soviets!" Nothing could stop the movement of the masses which found expression in the demonstration organized by the Bolsheviks. A few provocative shots were fired by supporters of the Provisional Government, but they were of no consequence. Demonstrations were held in other cities, too, and in many rural districts.

The April demonstration was the first serious rift in the compromising policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and started a crisis in the Provisional Government. It helped considerably to cure the petty bourgeois masses

of their belief in the peace-loving character of the Provision Government and to accelerate the process of transition of the masses to the side of the Bolsheviks, the process of growth of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution.

The April demonstration compelled the Provisional Government to resort to a maneuver with the object of gaining time for a new offensive against the revolution. Scared by the demonstration, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries tried to persuade their masters to withdraw their declared intention of continuing the war. But the bosses knew what they were about. They, in their turn, threatened to resign if the compromisers did not join the government. The lackeys hearkened to the voice of their masters. The doors of the government were temporarily thrown open to them. A coalition Provisional Government was formed that included Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Under pressure of the masses, Milyukov and Guchkov were dropped from the government.

The Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary majority on the Soviets were prepared to go to any lengths to prevent power passing into the hands of the Soviets. By their coalition with the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries helped the counter-revolutionaries to consolidate their position and prepare for a new attack on the revolution. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries thus deserted to the camp of the counter-revolutionary bour-

geoisie. The meaning of these recent events had to be explained to the masses and new efforts undertaken to prepare them for the decisive struggles that were impending.

Lenin and Stalin time and again stressed the cardinal importance of the Party's continuing its persistent propaganda and organizational work under these circumstances. In a resolution adopted by the Bolshevik Central Committee on April 22, 1917, the tasks of the Party were defined as follows:

"The slogans of the moment are:

(1) To *explain* the proletarian line and the proletarian method of ending the war; (2) To *criticize* the petty-bourgeois policy of placing trust in the government of the capitalists and compromising with it; (3) To carry on propaganda and agitation from group to group in *every* regiment, in *every* factory, and, particularly among the most backward masses, such as domestic servants, unskilled laborers, etc., since it was on them especially that the bourgeoisie endeavored to rely in the days of the crisis; (4) To *organize, organize and once more organize* the proletariat, in every factory, in every district and in every city quarter." (Lenin and Stalin, 1917, p. 83.)

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At the beginning of the revolution, the bulk of the peasantry were under the sway of defencism. But at the same time the whole situation drove them to take up the cudgels against their real enemies, the landlords and capitalists.

The first volume of the *History of the Civil War* quotes some charac-

teristic letters from soldiers, revealing the direction in which their minds were working at the beginning of the revolution.

"We all feel and realize quite well what we want," one soldier wrote in March, 1917. "God only grant us victory over the foreign enemy and then we shall tackle the internal enemy, that is, the landlords." (*The History of the Civil War in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 244. International Publishers, New York.)

And this from another letter:

"We are all glad of liberty. It is terrible to die when the doors have been flung wide open in Russia. . . . Every . . . soldier wants to see the bright and happy life of today for which we have been waiting for 307 years. . . . But the terrible thing is that this bloodshed will never cease." (*Ibid.*, pp. 244-45.)

But the longer the war dragged on, the more outspoken became the anti-war sentiments of the soldiers. In April and May, 1917, they began, with growing insistence, to demand the early termination of the war, and threatened to leave the front.

Every day brought greater disillusionment. The coalition government did nothing to save the country and the people from the horrors of the war, from the economic disruption it had brought in its train, from famine and impending catastrophe.

The war continued. The economic life of the country kept going from bad to worse. Unemployment grew. The factory owners kept throwing workers onto the streets, but the

Soviets and the Provisional Government did nothing to curb the capitalists. The peasants continued to remain without land. They were given lavish promises; but the Government took no chances and sent detachments of troops into the country for the protection of the landed estates. The old officer caste remained in command of the army. The old bureaucratic government machine was left intact. The old imperialist policy towards the oppressed nationalities continued in full force.

The Provisional Government could not satisfy even the most elementary needs of the working masses, because it stood for the continuation of the imperialist war. Thus, in 1917, the war was the central issue in the life of the people. The country could not be saved from the war, from economic disruption and famine unless the power of the bourgeoisie were overthrown. The causes that had led to the April crisis continued to operate with ever growing intensity.

Every step taken by the Provisional Government under these circumstances, when the revolution had awakened vast masses of the people to independent political life, could not but increase the discontent of the people. The working masses were becoming politically enlightened and drawing closer to the Bolsheviks, whose slogans gave voice to their cherished aspirations, and who worked to unite them in a struggle for a Soviet government.

What the Bolsheviks had proclaimed at the very beginning of the revolution was now, after the

April demonstration, being rapidly brought home to the masses. This process was facilitated by the propaganda and organizational work of the Bolsheviks.

While patiently but persistently carrying on their propaganda and agitational work, the Bolsheviks at the same time strove to organize the workers, soldiers, peasants and the working people of the oppressed nationalities. They headed a powerful mass movement for the formation of trade unions and shop committees in the mills and factories. A conference of factory committees held in Petrograd from May 30 to June 3 entirely followed the leadership of the Bolsheviks. The municipal elections in Petrograd in the early part of June resulted in a big victory for the Bolsheviks in the working class quarters. That meant that the majority of the Petrograd proletariat were already supporting the Bolshevik Party.

The influence of the Bolsheviks was likewise growing in the army. Working persistently and perseveringly among the soldiers, they set up Party organizations in the military units, disseminated Bolshevik newspapers and carried on verbal propaganda. The *Soldatskaya Pravda* (*Soldier's Truth*), published in Petrograd, and the *Okopnaya Pravda* (*Trench Truth*) at the front, played a big part in winning over the army for the Bolsheviks.

On the eve of the June demonstration, over half the Petrograd garrison sided with the Bolsheviks. Strong Bolshevik organizations already existed in a number of regiments.

An All-Russian conference of Bolshevik Party organizations in the army which opened on June 16, 1917, was attended by forty-eight delegates from the front and seventeen from the rear, representing five hundred regiments and Bolshevik groups embracing twenty-six thousand soldiers. This conference was guided by Lenin and Stalin. They intellectually armed the delegates and the whole Party for more effective efforts to rid the soldiers of the influence of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

At the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets which assembled at the beginning of June, and at which the Bolsheviks represented only one-tenth of the delegates, Lenin gave an example of Bolshevik propaganda. He was sitting unobtrusively among the delegates in the body of the hall when, speaking from the rostrum, Tsereteli, the Menshevik leader, confidently and boastingly declared:

"There is no political party in Russia at this juncture which would say: Hand over the power to us, quit, we will take your place. . . . There is no such party in Russia! . . .

"There is such a party!"

"It was the voice of Lenin hurling this challenge at the Mensheviks in the name of the Bolshevik Party.

"The audience was electrified. The drowsy Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik delegates were suddenly jerked into wakefulness and began to buzz with excitement. Delegates rose to their feet to get a glimpse of the man who had hurled this challenge at the bosses. Consternation reigned among the lead-

ers in the Presidium. But Lenin was already mounting the rostrum.

"He said that there is no political party in Russia that would express its readiness to take the entire power upon itself. . . . I say there is! No party can refuse this, and our party does not refuse it; it is prepared at any minute to take over the entire power.'" (*Ibid.*, pp. 224-25.)

Lenin went on to expound the Bolshevik program for coping with the crisis. The delegates listened with bated breath. And when the compromisers in the Presidium of the Congress tried to silence Lenin on the grounds that his allotted time had expired, the majority of the delegates vigorously applauded him and demanded that his time be extended. Lenin continued his speech. He ended by calling for the establishment of the power of the revolutionary proletariat supported by the poor peasantry. His simple but forceful words made a deep impression on the rank-and-file delegates at the congress—the workers and soldiers.

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One of the most widespread illusions among the masses at that period was a belief in the almighty power of the Constituent Assembly which the bourgeoisie had promised to convene. "Let us wait for the Constituent Assembly, it will settle everything," was the prevailing sentiment of the petty bourgeois, who constituted the largest section of the population of Russia. But this sentiment harbored a grave danger to the revolution, for it enabled the



bourgeoisie to gain time and to muster its forces for an attack on the revolution. The Bolsheviks persistently explained to the masses that:

"The question of the Constituent Assembly is *subordinate* to the question of the course and issue of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 179.)

The strength of the Bolsheviks' struggle against the constitutional illusions of the masses in 1917 lay in the fact that they took up and developed the most urgent demands of the masses and showed them that they could not possibly be satisfied under a bourgeois government, but only under a government of workers and poor peasants, a government which would not hesitate to adopt revolutionary measures towards the bourgeoisie.

While working for a Soviet Republic, the Bolsheviks demanded the immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly, thus exposing the counter-revolutionary character of the Provisional Government. Subsequent events furnished brilliant corroboration of the Bolshevik tactics on this question. As we know, the bourgeoisie never did convene the Constituent Assembly. It was convened by the Bolsheviks in January, 1918.

The Constituent Assembly, then, refused to endorse the decrees on land, peace and the transfer of power to the Soviets issued in pursuance of the will of the workers and peasants, and was accordingly dissolved. The Bolshevik Party thus proved to the

masses in the most striking fashion the counter-revolutionary character of the Constituent Assembly. These tactics contributed considerably to the complete exposure of the compromising policy of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties in the eyes of the masses. In his "October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists," Comrade Stalin wrote:

"... If the Bolsheviks had not pursued this policy towards the Constituent Assembly they would not have succeeded in winning over to their side the masses of the people; and if they had not won over these masses, they could not have transformed the October insurrection into a profound people's revolution." (J. V. Stalin, *The October Revolution*, p. 123, International Publishers, New York.)

The Bolsheviks also denounced the petty-bourgeois interpretation of the question of a majority. They treated this question from the standpoint of the actual fundamental interests of the majority of the people. They showed that the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary majority in the Soviets did not answer to the interests of the majority of the people and was hoodwinking them.

The interests of the working class coincide with the interests of the majority of the people. It is the only class which, having taken the power into its own hands, can administer the state in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the people.

Highly important is a remark made by Lenin at this period to the effect that revolutionaries must

sometimes go against the current and take the risk of remaining for a time in the minority. Retorting to the Menshevik lackeys of the bourgeoisie, who endeavored to mask their treachery under the plea that the masses were chauvinistic and that it was their desire to remain with the masses, Lenin wrote:

"Is it not more worthy of internationalists at this moment to be able to resist 'mass' intoxication than to 'wish to remain' with the masses, i.e., to succumb to the general epidemic? Have we not seen how the chauvinists in all the belligerent countries of Europe justified themselves on the ground that they wished to 'remain with the masses'? Is it not essential to be able for a while to remain in a minority as against the 'mass' intoxication?" (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 44.)

But when going against the current one must know how. In April, for example, Lenin wrote that to issue the slogan "Down with the war!" would be a mistake, for the misled masses, infected with "revolutionary defensism," would not listen to it.

"The slogan 'Down with the war!'" Lenin wrote, "is, of course, a correct one. But it fails to take into account the specific nature of the tasks of the present moment and of the necessity of approaching the masses in a *different* way. It is, in my opinion, similar to the slogan 'Down with the tsar!' with which the inexperienced agitator of the 'good old days' went simply and directly to the country districts—and received a beating." (*Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.)

The Bolsheviks had patiently and persistently to explain and prove that the bourgeoisie needed the war for the sake of their own pockets, and not for the defense of the revolution, and that the character and aims of a war depended on what class was waging it. And this is what the Bolsheviks did.

As we had already said, the tremendous self-sacrificing educational and organizational work of the Bolsheviks very soon began to bear fruit. Large masses of people began to listen to the Bolsheviks, to draw closer to them and to support them.

\* \* \*

With the formation of the coalition Provisional Government, the spontaneous movement of the working people continued steadily to spread. An outbreak of popular indignation of gigantic power and dimensions was maturing.

The Bolsheviks based all their activities on this growing movement of the masses, organized it and led it. By the end of April the Bolshevik Party already had a membership of eighty thousand, and its ranks were rapidly growing. In Petrograd, the Party already had strong support in the working class districts and in the garrisons.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party appointed a peaceful demonstration of workers and soldiers for June 10. All the arrangements had already been made, when late at night on the eve of the demonstration it was learned that, on the insistence of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries,

the All-Russian Congress of Soviets had adopted a decision prohibiting the demonstration. The Bolsheviks submitted to this decision, anxious not to come into conflict with the congress. The Provisional Government and the counter-revolutionary forces lurking behind it wanted at all costs to provoke the Bolsheviks into some indiscretion and to drive the masses into premature action so as to furnish an excuse for crushing the revolution. The Bolsheviks denounced the provocative designs of the counter-revolutionaries and refused to fall into the trap.

The Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet could not close its eyes to the formidable tide of the rising anger of the people. Feeling that the workers and soldiers would act without it and in spite of it, it decided to call a demonstration on June 18 (July 1) under the auspices of the Congress of Soviets. The Mensheviks counted on being able to exploit the revolutionary mood of the masses for their own ends.

The Bolsheviks took a most active part in the preparations for this demonstration. On June 14, Stalin wrote in the *Pravda*:

"Now it is our task to ensure that the demonstration in Petrograd on June 18 is held under our revolutionary slogans." (Lenin-Stalin, 1917, p. 183.)

And this, the Party achieved.

On June 18, four hundred thousand persons came out onto the streets of Petrograd. The over-

whelming majority of them marched under the Bolshevik slogans.

"The air reverberates to the shouts. Now and again cries are heard: 'Down with the ten capitalist Ministers!' 'All power to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!' And in response loud and approving cheers ring out from all sides. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 191.)

June 18, 1917, was a distinct landmark in the development of the revolution. The June demonstration signified a second crisis of power in the country. It revealed that a profound shifting of classes had taken place since the time of the April crisis.

The masses were rapidly swinging away from the compromisers. Lenin's tactics of isolating the compromising parties were bearing abundant fruit. The revolution was steadily advancing. The bourgeoisie were in a state of real consternation. The June demonstration, as Lenin said:

". . . assumed the character of a demonstration of the strength and policy of the revolutionary proletariat, which is pointing the direction for the revolution and pointing the way out of the impasse." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 164.)

The Provisional Government of the petty-bourgeois parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, feverishly sought for a means of curbing the revolution. The British and French imperialists were categorically demanding that the Russian forces at the front take

the offensive. To this the Provisional Government consented.

The offensive at the front was launched on the same day as the demonstration of June 18; but within ten days it had completely collapsed. It cost the lives of sixty thousand men. The generals had not made proper preparations for it. But they threw the whole blame for the defeat on the Bolsheviks and demanded the dissolution of the Bolshevik Party.

The counter-revolutionaries proceeded to concentrate the whole power of the state in their own hands. The Cadets, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries came to an agreement on this score. The bourgeoisie knew their partners, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, very well; they knew that what they feared most was to remain in power alone and that they would accept any conditions the Cadets demanded. But the offensive at the front and its collapse had aroused the profound indignation of the workers and soldiers, who were already in a state of growing unrest as it was. On July 3, armed workers and soldiers began to assemble outside the Taurida Palace in Petrograd, stormily demanding the transfer of power to the Soviets. A huge armed demonstration was impending.

Lenin and Stalin were fully aware of the intense indignation of the masses, but they considered that an armed demonstration at that juncture would be both dangerous and to no purpose, for it was, in fact, the design of the counter-revolutionaries to take advantage

of the moment when the revolution had not yet fully ripened all over the country to provoke the masses to come out onto the streets, and to crush them.

The Bolshevik Central Committee took measures to explain to the masses that an armed demonstration in Petrograd would be highly inexpedient. But the indignation of the workers and soldiers was so profound that there was no possibility of restraining them. Thereupon, Lenin and Stalin showed an example of how a revolutionary party of the working class should act in such circumstances. They recommended that the earlier decision be reversed, that the demonstration be led and organized, so as to lend it a peaceful character and prevent the enemy from provoking the workers into premature armed action. That is what the Bolshevik Party did.

The demonstration of July 4 assumed tremendous dimensions and continued all through the night. Huge masses of workers and soldiers, led by the Bolsheviks, marched to the headquarters of the Petrograd Soviet and of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, demanding that the Soviets take over power and break with the bourgeoisie and its imperialist policy.

The demonstration bore a peaceful character. Nevertheless, reactionary military units, which had just been brought into Petrograd, were sent out against the demonstrators. Several of the columns were attacked by cavalry. The streets of Petrograd were stained



with the blood of workers and soldiers.

The military cadets wrecked the offices of the *Soldatskaya Pravda*.

A hue and cry was raised against the Bolsheviks. On July 7 the Provisional Government issued a warrant for Lenin's arrest. Capital punishment was introduced. The Bolshevik Party was again driven underground. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks went over to the imperialist bourgeoisie lock, stock and barrel, and sunk up to their necks in the mire of counter-revolution. The bourgeoisie secured undivided power. Kerensky, the Prime Minister in the new government, was only a screen. The masters of the situation were the military clique, behind whose backs stood the Cadets.

The peaceful period in the development of the revolution had ended.

The masses had received a stern lesson. They had expected liberty, peace, bread and land from the revolution. But what did the bourgeoisie offer them now?

Instead of bread, starvation. Instead of liberty, the destruction of the workers' organization. Instead of peace, the continuation of the criminal war. The bourgeoisie were steadily restoring the old order. The government did not lift a finger to curb the profiteers, the robbers who were piling up wealth on the war. But, on the other hand, they again began to institute proceedings against the peasants for seizing the land. They continued to feed the peasants with promises, but they gave them no land.

"As to the land," Lenin wrote, "wait until the Constituent Assembly. As to the Constituent Assembly, wait until the end of the war. As to the end of the war, wait until a complete victory is won. That is what it comes to. The capitalists and landlords, having a majority in the government, are simply mocking at the peasants." (*Ibid.*, p. 192.)

At a first glance it might seem that everything was shaping in favor of the bourgeoisie. But, as a matter of fact, the July days brought the revolution nearer, prepared the masses for it. Lenin and Stalin realized this perfectly. It was no longer possible to continue with the old slogans, to pursue the old tactics, to fight with the old methods. The tactics and forms of struggle had to be changed in conformity with the new situation.

Lenin and Stalin explained the necessity for this change of tactics. In the pamphlet *On Slogans*, Lenin wrote:

"The cycle of development of the class and party struggle in Russia from March 12 (February 27) to July 17 (4) is complete. A new cycle is beginning, one that involves not the old classes, not the old parties, not the old Soviets, but classes, parties and Soviets that have been rejuvenated in the fire of struggle, tempered, schooled and refashioned in the course of the struggle. We must look forward, not backward. We must operate not with the old, but with the new, post-July, class and party categories." (*Ibid.*, p. 174.)

In the report he delivered on the political situation at the Sixth Con-

gress of the Bolshevik Party, held in Petrograd from July 26 to August 3, Stalin said:

"... Until July 3 a peaceful victory, a peaceful transfer of power to the Soviets was possible. Had the Congress of Soviets decided to take power, I think the Cadets would not have dared to come out openly against the Soviets, for such a step would have been doomed to failure from the very outset. But now that the counter-revolution has organized and consolidated itself, it is utter nonsense to say that the Soviets can take over power peacefully. The peaceful period of the revolution has come to an end; the non-peaceful period, a period of clashes and outbreaks has begun." (Lenin-Stalin, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 139-40, International Publishers, New York.)

Now, Lenin taught, the transfer of power to the Soviets could no longer be demanded, for the majority of them had openly gone over to the bourgeoisie. The slogan "All power to the Soviets!" had to be withdrawn, for it no longer answered the situation. Power could no longer be won by peaceful means.

The transfer of the entire power to the proletariat and poor peasantry now became the new slogan of the Party. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry could be won only as a result of a successful insurrection. Preparations had to be made for armed insurrection.

"The peaceful period of the revolution had ended, for now the bayonet had been placed on the agenda." (*History of the Commu-*

*nist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 195.)

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After the July days a certain lull set in in the movement of the masses. It was as if the masses had paused to take stock of what had taken place, to adjust their thoughts and to weigh events. The countless promises and assurances of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries depreciated in value with every passing day; the wretched phrasemongering of the compromisers lost its glitter. The realization of the need for a decisive struggle, a struggle of life and death, steadily gained ground. The idea of storming the citadel of capitalism rapidly matured in the minds of the masses. They began to grow aware of their own strength, and waited for the hour of decisive battle. This Lenin and Stalin clearly realized.

Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie, having concentrated the power in its own hands, was making active preparations to smash the Bolsheviks and the debilitated Soviets, and to pave the way for an open counter-revolutionary dictatorship.

It was Kerensky who aspired to the laurels of a Russian Cavaignac. However, this Socialist-Revolutionary lawyer inspired little confidence in the bourgeoisie. It preferred a man of action, and it found him in General Kornilov.

On August 25 Kornilov moved the Third Cavalry Corps against Petrograd. But then something happened which this general, who aspired to the role of dictator, had never expected. The Bolshevik Party, head-

ed by Lenin and Stalin, had been keeping a careful watch on events. The Bolshevik Central Committee called upon the workers and soldiers to put up armed resistance to the counter-revolution.

The news of General Kornilov's counter-revolutionary attempt stirred up the masses all over the country. Answering the appeal of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, workers, soldiers and sailors rose up with arms in hand to resist the advancing counter-revolution.

The Bolsheviks were busy everywhere, mustering the working folk in defense of the revolution. The armed workers and soldiers set up revolutionary committees and staffs to combat the Kornilov attempt.

Kornilov's action caused the revolution to take a new turn, putting an end to the fatal illusions on the subject of compromise with the bourgeoisie. Kerensky was forced to beat a retreat, to make a right-about-face, and even to take measures against Kornilov. He realized that if he did not do so, the movement of the masses might sweep him away, too, and the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries with him.

The situation had changed. The masses had risen up in a united front against counter-revolution. And Lenin at once wrote to the Central Committee pointing to the necessity of reckoning with the changed situation and changing the Party's tactics accordingly. He stressed the necessity of changing the *forms* of struggle with Kerensky, inasmuch as the latter had disassociated himself from Kornilov

and had been obliged to turn against him. During the Kornilov affair Lenin deemed it unwise and harmful to call for the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government, of which Kerensky had been the head since the July days.

"How, then, must our tactics be changed after the Kornilov revolt?" Lenin asked, and replied:

"We must change the *form* of our struggle against Kerensky. While not relaxing our hostility towards him one jot, while not withdrawing a single word we have said against him, while not renouncing the aim of overthrowing Kerensky, we say: We must *reckon* with the present state of affairs; we shall not overthrow Kerensky just now; we shall adopt a *different* method of fighting him, namely, we shall point out to the people (who are fighting Kornilov) the *weakness* and *vacillation* of Kerensky. That was done *before* too. But now it has become the *main thing*. That is the change." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 206.)

Lenin and Stalin always demanded that Bolsheviks know how to solve problems as they arise. In the new situation that had arisen, Lenin stressed the necessity for more energetic agitation on behalf of what might be called "partial demands" to Kerensky:

". . . Arrest Milyukov; arm the Petrograd workers; summon the Kronstadt, Viborg and Helsingfors troops to Petrograd; disperse the State Duma; arrest Rodzyanko; legalize the transfer of the landlords' estates to the peasants; introduce workers' control over bread and over the factories, etc., etc.

These demands must be addressed not only to Kerensky, and *not so much* to Kerensky, as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have been *carried away* by the struggle against Kornilov. Rouse them still further; encourage them to beat up the generals and officers who are in favor of supporting Kornilov; urge *them* to demand the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants; suggest to *them* the necessity of arresting Rodzyanko and Milyukov, of dispersing the State Duma, shutting down the *Rech* and other bourgeois papers, and instituting proceedings against them." (*Ibid.*)

Thus the Bolsheviks helped the masses in the way most comprehensible to them to realize the necessity of overthrowing Kerensky himself.

By taking the lead of the masses during the Kornilov plot, and adapting its tactics to the new conditions, the Bolsheviks achieved outstanding successes. Kornilov was smashed. The workers were armed. The incarcerated Bolsheviks were liberated from prison. During the fighting against Kornilov a Red Guard was formed in Petrograd. The Bolsheviks had formed even stronger contacts with the factories and garrison. Their influence in the provinces had grown immensely. Now the Soviets began to turn Bolshevik. The revolution steadily spread. The peasants set fire to manors and arbitrarily began to seize the landed estates.

Meanwhile, the war proceeded, ruthlessly disrupting every branch of national life. The economic organization of the country crumbled away at startling speed. Inevitable

catastrophe faced Russia. It loomed larger and larger.

Lenin and Stalin pointed out that although ways of averting catastrophe and starvation existed, and although these ways were perfectly obvious and perfectly feasible, yet nothing was being done:

"... *only* because," Lenin wrote, "*exclusively* because their adoption would affect the untold profits of a handful of landlords and capitalists. . . ." (Lenin-Stalin, 1917, p. 420.)

It was necessary, as Lenin pointed out, to introduce state control, accountancy and regulation of the production and distribution of goods, to nationalize the banks and syndicates, and to abolish commercial secrets. But these measures could be effected only by a revolutionary workers' and peasants' government. Lenin brilliantly demonstrated that the material conditions for the transition to socialism in Russia were fully ripe, and that the movement towards socialism only depended on the degree to which the masses sided with the Bolsheviks.

Lenin and Stalin kept a keen and careful eye on the class movements that were taking place in the country, on the way the masses were espousing the Bolshevik program for combating the crisis and saving the country from disaster. After the Kornilov affair, no efforts of bankrupt windbags like Kerensky, Avksentyev and Tsereteli could prevent the masses from siding with the Bolsheviks.

Their attempt to divert the work-



ing people from the revolution by convening what was known as the All-Russian Democratic Council, which they pretended represented the whole people, ended in failure.

The vast majority of the Soviets were opposed to coalition with the bourgeoisie. On September 18, a conference of representatives of Peasants' Soviets took place in Petrograd, at which the representatives from twenty-three provinces and four armies, as well as the overwhelming majority of the representatives of the national groups, came out against a coalition.

In *Can the Bolsheviks Retain Power?*, written October 7-14, 1917, Lenin made a brilliant analysis of the movements that had taken place among the masses since the revolution. He showed that the proletariat was already leading the peasant millions, that it had rallied the petty bourgeoisie and wrested it from the influence of the bourgeoisie.

In September and October, 1917, the Russian proletariat acted already as the representative of the people on every fundamental issue of the revolution, and, above all, on the most urgent issue of the time—how to get the country out of the war and save it from starvation and disaster.

The revolution was led by the Party of Lenin and Stalin, which between February and October had grown tenfold and already numbered four hundred thousand members.

On August 31 in Petrograd, and on September 5 in Moscow, the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers'

Deputies for the first time adopted Bolshevik resolutions. From all parts of the country news came pouring in of Soviets passing into the hands of the Bolsheviks. This was of decisive importance.

"Having obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals," Lenin wrote in the middle of September, 1917, "the Bolsheviks can and must take over the power of government. . . .

"The majority of the people are on our side. This was proved by the long and painful course of events from May 19 to September 13 and to September 25. The majority gained in the Soviets of the capitals was a result of the fact that the people have developed in our direction." (Lenin-Stalin, *The Russian Revolution*, p. 188.)

And once again the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" resounded through the country. But now it meant something entirely different from what it had meant in the July days. The Soviets were now Bolshevik.

"In the flames of the struggle," Stalin wrote in September, 1917, "the moribund Soviets are reviving. They are once again taking the helm and leading the revolutionary masses.

"All power to the Soviets!—such is the slogan of the new movement." (*Ibid.*, p. 196.)

At the end of July, 1917, Lenin had written in his "Lessons of the Revolution":

"The lesson of the Russian revo-

lution is that there is no escape for the masses from the iron grip of war, famine and enslavement to the landlords and capitalists, unless they completely break with the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, unless they clearly recognize the treacherous role of the latter, unless they renounce all compromise with the bourgeoisie and decidedly come over to the side of the revolutionary workers. Only the revolutionary workers, supported by the poor peasants, can smash the resistance of the capitalists and lead the people to the conquest of the land without compensation, to complete freedom, to salvation from famine, the cessation of war, and to a just and lasting peace." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 204.)

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In 1917 the Bolsheviks set an epoch-making example of how to win the masses in the midst of war

and revolution, and how to lead them to armed insurrection.

Stalin teaches us that:

"A political party is not the same thing as a military army. While a military command begins a war with an army ready at its hand, the Party has to create its army in the course of the struggle itself, in the course of class conflicts, as fast as the masses themselves become convinced by their own experience that the slogans of the Party, the policy of the Party, are right." (J. V. Stalin, *The October Revolution*, p. 114.)

In October, 1917, the Bolsheviks already had a political army ready at hand and capable of making a revolution. This army was led to victory in the immortal days of the great October Revolution by the Bolshevik Party, headed by the great teachers and leaders of toiling humanity—Lenin and Stalin.

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